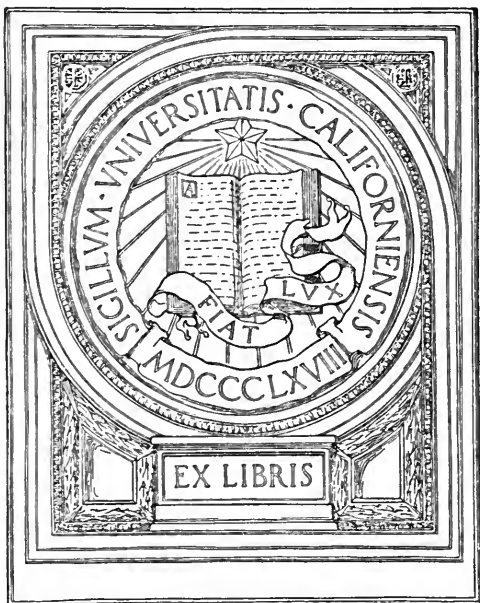
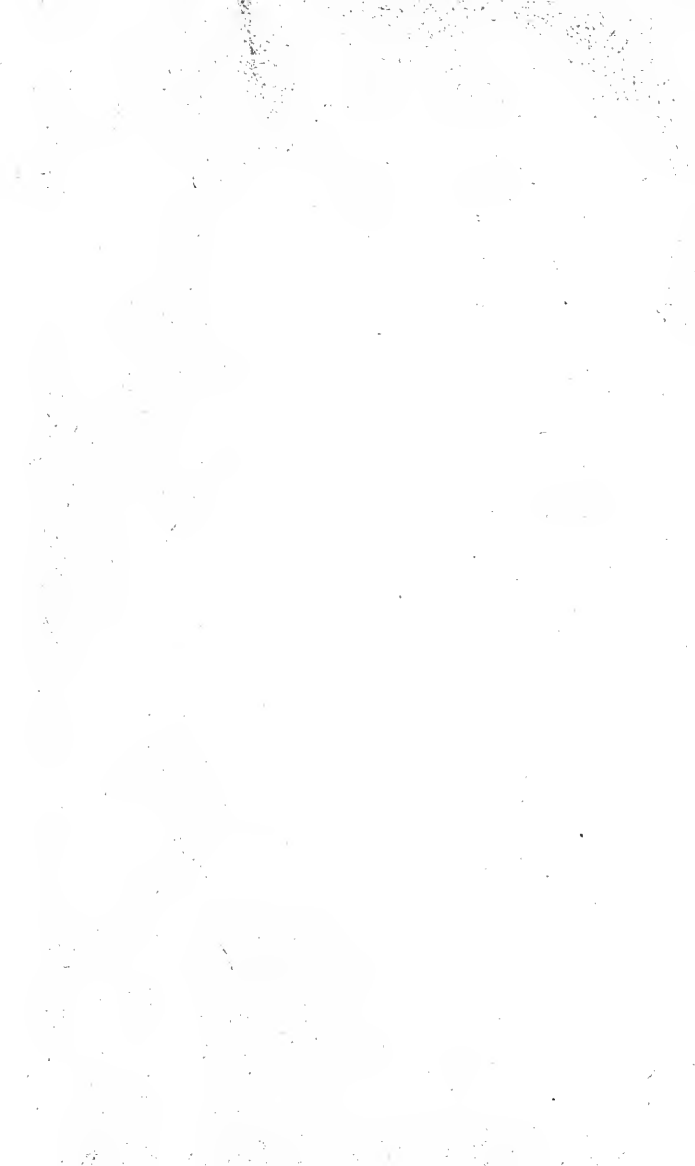




UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES



ROBERT ERNEST COWAN



50 Cents

I Swear

The
Story of a
California Girl
in Boston

BY Frank H. Sowers

OF California

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I SWEAR.

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Dear Mr. Morrison:

I enclose you the picture of myself I promised you about a week ago. I hope you will like it as well as you did the proof - your call this evening was so charming and interesting that I find myself paraphrasing the quotation from Will Charlton's "Gone with a Handsome Man" "To appreciate heaven well just give a man about 15 minutes of hell" into -

"I appreciate hell on earth."
Just let a girl know a little of heaven with I guess our scene in the "den" could be called a little of heaven, couldn't it? And perhaps you think our scene with papa, could be called a little of the other place - now do not think that papa will ever refer to that matter again - because he hates of scenes, as he calls them

will prevent him ever speaking of
them. By the way, I want to speak
of another matter. Really, my friend,
we must stop our little flirtation,
interesting as it is. I suggest that we
enter into an armistice. You see
this might become a confirmed habit -
and as we can not keep it up forever,
I suppose we had better determine on
the terms of truce, the next time I see
you. So be prepared to see me come
down with the white flag flying, to
indicate my intention to ask for a
cessation of hostilities, the next time
you call. Till which time, may it
be soon. I am

yours Very Truly

Fanny Northrop

Boston }

May 26-18- }

I SWEAR.

—BY—

FRANK H. POWERS,
OF
CALIFORNIA.

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PROLOGUE.

FROM the time of the treaty of Hopewell in 1785, up to about the middle of the present century, the Cherokee Nation of Indians was one of the few tribes that never had been conquered by the United States ; her chiefs carried on their little scheme of civilization in the northern portion of Georgia, "the world unheeding, by the world forgot."

But as Georgia developed her resources, the pushing American settler began to scheme to obtain for himself the Indian lands. The first direct attack came when the Legislature of Georgia annulled the Indian laws, and attempted to extend the State's jurisdiction over the homes of the innocent and trusting Cherokees.

At this time there were four chiefs—all of the Brooke dynasty. The aged head chief was known to the whites as Major Brooke, and with him there were three subordinates : Cheecatolawry, a younger brother of Major Brooke's father ; John Craig, a Scotchman, who had originally come into the nation as a fur trader, but who had finally married Major Brooke's only daughter ; and John Brooke, the Major's son, a young man of sterling worth. Through the influence of the missionaries, especially that of Father Gambol, a grand old priest, who had spent almost a lifetime in the nation, the Major was induced to send many of the brighter youths to the Indian school at Cornwall, Connecticut. Father Gambol had himself prepared John Brooke for Harvard College ; in fact, John was a student at Cambridge about the time the Georgia Legislature attempted to invade the Nation's rights.

Major Brooke was far-sighted enough to realize that Georgia's action indicated that civilization had marked out his nation's happy hunting ground for its prey. With him also the more intelligent Indians understood that they would in time be forced to leave their lands, as other tribes had been, and that it would be wise to obtain from Congress other territory in the far West, and to peaceably occupy it, rather than attempt to hold their present homes ; but the majority, with their instinctive love for the hunting grounds of their fathers, favored remaining on their present lands, and defending them if necessary, even with their lives.

The whites were attempting various expedients to effect their removal. There was a general feeling of uneasiness throughout the nation. It was arranged to call a meeting of the Great Council.

After a stormy discussion, the Council decided to send Major Brooke to Washington, to attempt to gain permission to retain their lands, and, in the event of a failure, to obtain the best agreement possible from the "Great Father."

As soon as the old Major was gone, the scheming craft of the Scotchman began to work. He saw that Brooke would be compelled to be the bearer of a proposition to give up their old homes and haunts, and the associations so dear to the Indians. He saw, also, that if he could incite a revolt, and be the leader of it, he would be in almost absolute control of the Nation. So he cultivated the friendship of the wildest and most savage of the Indians, in order to place himself in a position to plant the seeds of suspicion, hatred, and revenge in their breasts when an opportune moment should arrive.

The old Major was gone nearly a year, and returned almost heart-broken, for the "Great Father" at Washington had assured him that unless the Cherokees agreed to give up their possessions, the government of the United States would be compelled to drive them out by force of arms. However, he had obtained a promise to give them, in payment, an immense tract of land in the Indian Territory, containing about five million acres of very fertile soil. The title to the land was to be in the name of the chiefs, to be held by them as trustees for the Cherokee Indians and their descendants.

Again was the Great Council called. Again were the heads of families invited to be present. Again did John Craig incite the wilder spirits to resist. Again did old Major Brooke make a noble speech, advising them to act with discretion, and with an eye to their ultimate and substantial good.

John Brooke had now returned permanently to his nation. Already he had shown them how to use the plow, and various other civilized devices for easy cultivation of the land, and had greatly assisted in modeling their institutions and developing their laws. He now arose and made a masterly oration, advising them to start a new nation, and, succumbing to the inevitable, to commence life anew, and make for themselves thrifty homes, after the style and ways of the white man.

The opinion of the Brooke party was finally accepted, Craig taking great pains to emphasize the fact that it was a Brooke idea.

The old Major and four of the head men were detailed to arrange the terms of settlement, with two commissioners appointed by the "Great Father."

A treaty was finally settled upon. Immediately after it was definitely arranged that his nation was to be removed to the far West, John Brooke

returned to Boston, and married Miss Annie Northrop, a lady of many gracious charms and most religious instincts. She had met him while he was a student at Harvard, and her love for him, combined with her desire to elevate an untutored race, made her determine to live with her husband in the new Cherokee Nation, and to try to lead the Indians to civilization by setting them a worthy example.

In pursuance of this philanthropic scheme, John Brooke was among the first to settle in the new territory. He brought with him all the modern implements of husbandry, built for himself a modern house, and in a short time reared a handsome property. In addition, he surveyed and laid out a complete town, with a church and school-house. His wife christened it "Utopia," in hopes that it might prove such to his people. As each little band of Indians arrived, he welcomed them at his own home, and helped them to begin their new lives.

Everything was strange to the Indians. They all longed for their old homes. The winter of that year was the most severe ever known in the Indian Territory. Here was Craig's opportunity. All along, on the trip across the plains, he had insidiously instilled into their savage minds the idea that the Brookes had arranged the matter with the "Great Father," and had sold their hunting-grounds. Now, in their sore physical distress, he saw a chance to incite the hungry and half-starved Indians to revenge themselves for the apparent treachery.

For some time there had been an estrangement between Craig and John Brooke. But Brooke was so busy with his several schemes for improvement, laying out and building his town and establishing a church, that he paid little attention to the machinations of his Scotch brother-in-law, who now saw almost within his grasp the supreme control of the Cherokee Nation.

After considerable parleying, Craig secured a meeting of the Great Council. He finally prevailed upon them to send the old Major off to Washington again, to ask for a distribution of rations earlier in the season, on account of the trying winter. Then Craig arranged to have about thirty of the boldest and most dissatisfied of the Indians meet at his home in a sheltered valley, some five miles from Utopia, down the Arkansas River. He had determined that John Brooke and his father, the old Major, must die. Preparatory to the meeting, he had consulted with three or four of the most daring, and they had advised him to await the old man's return from Washington. Craig did not agree with them, and fearing that upon deliberation some might repent, he insisted upon immediate action.

He dared not let either of the Brookes address the men, for he knew how easily they were swayed by oratory. So he arranged that one party should

lie in wait for the Major in a secluded spot on his road to Van Buren, a little river town in Arkansas, from which he could obtain transportation to Washington, and that another body should surround the house of John Brooke, and kill him before he even fancied any danger.

On the afternoon of the day Major Brooke left for Washington, Craig had instructed a few trusted lieutenants to gather together those of the Indians on whom they could rely.

There had been fitful gusts of rain early in the evening, and by midnight the moon, which had shone forth intermittently during the early part of the evening, having gone down, darkness had added gloom to the stormy night. Then, here and there, about and around John Brooke's house, the lithe forms of a score or so of restless, uneasy Indians began to gather. Every now and then one of them would go back to a man standing alone behind a small clump of cottonwood trees, to report. Finally, they collected in front of the house. As if by magic one of them produced a key and opened the front door.

They all stealthily entered the sitting-room, where two hours before had sat John Brooke and his wife. They started to open the bedroom door. John Brooke sprang from his bed, and seeing the men, braced himself against the wall. He held back the door with one hand, and with the other he pushed aside the leader.

"What are you doing here, men?" he demanded. Then, realizing that they must be bent on mischief, he said, "My father and I have been your friends; We—"

"Don't let him talk to us," Craig cried.

"Don't let him talk to us," echoed one of the men in the back ranks, and at that moment John Brooke received a knife in his breast. As Brooke staggered back, others pushed forward to assist their leader in the murder. Before the last man had finished his dastardly work a fearful shriek gave evidence that Brooke's poor wife had awakened and discovered what had taken place. Immediately they all rushed out into the dark night, leaving the poor woman with her dying husband.

"Nan, bring me my rifle, quick!" commanded the dying man. "No, no light!" then, as if in great pain, "Quick! the devils will get away!"

"No, John, no! What is the matter; what have they done?" cried the wife.

Striking a light, she saw what had happened. She quickly recovered her presence of mind, and saw that her husband had swooned. She nerved herself and hastened to raise him on the bed, and tie up his arm to prevent the flow of blood from an artery which had been severed. Then she

administered a stimulant, and called Wawona, their little daughter, and the servant.

When little Wawona came into the room, her mother motioned her to silence, while she tried to rouse her husband. Soon he showed signs of life, and with a convulsive start regained consciousness.

"Swear that you will revenge my death!" he said, half delirious. "I know it all—John Craig had them murder me, and my poor father is probably now lying dead on the public road. Wawona, swear that you will be revenged! revenged!" gasped the father, his Indian nature seeming to take full control of his thoughts.

"Oh, John, don't think of that! Don't die with that idea in your mind. Have you no thought for little Wawona and me? Speak! for God's sake, speak! Don't die! Don't leave us!"

The expression on his face changed. His Indian spirit gave way to his love. He beckoned his child to the bedside, put his arm around her, and grasping the hand of his wife firmly, said in disjointed gasps:

"Yes, you're right. My Christianity ought to make me think of you in these last moments. I see it all. By our death you two alone, besides my old uncle, stand in the way of John Craig and his ambitions in this Nation. Now swear to me, both of you swear, that you will have nothing to do with this man or his, in any way. Swear to me!"

With a mighty effort he raised himself on his elbow, notwithstanding his wife's attempt to restrain him.

"Now both of you place your left hands on your hearts, and hold your right hands up to God, and swear to me that you will never have any connection in any way whatsoever with John Craig, or his."

"I swear!" came from both.

"Good-by! Take Wawona to your brother. Farewell, my wife. fare—" before he could finish, his breath stopped; he could only press Wawona to his breast and sink back.

The position relieved him. He breathed again.

Suddenly he sat up, with his eyes almost bursting from their sockets. He looked at the child an instant, and then motioning her to come to him, he placed her little left hand on his heart, and holding her right hand up, gasped "Swear it! Swear it!"

"I swear never to have anything to do with John Craig or his, so long as I live," came in clear, childish accents. As the little voice ceased, John Brooke gave a long, deep gasp, and fell back—dead.

The next day a runner was sent to inform his father of what had happened. He returned with the news that Major Brooke himself was killed, as his son had predicted. The poor wife was almost crazed with grief.

She sat by the side of her dead husband, the very embodiment of woe and desolate despair. All her sacrifices of youth and beauty, the comforts of home and civilization, now counted for nothing.

Poor little Wawona hovered about, hardly knowing where to turn for sympathy. The dark faces of those who had been the dead man's friends tried to look kindly on her and comfort her, but all hope seemed driven away by the recurrence of her father's face, as he commanded her to swear her solemn oath.

There was general lamentation over his unhappy death, universal sorrow expressed, by some, no doubt, who had been privy to the assassination, and who, in private, gloated over the event.

The widow, remembering her husband's warning, fearing that her child would be unsafe in the country of her father's murderers, and unwilling to remain where everything reminded her of her great bereavement, returned to the home of her brother, Amos Northrop, a banker in Boston. There, some three years after the tragedy, she died, leaving Wawona and the little fortune she had saved from her husband's possessions to the guardianship of her brother. Her last words to Wawona, then a bright, nervous, impressionable girl of ten, were :

"Always remember your father, dear. Love him, honor him, revere him. He was a chief in more than name—he was a noble, true man."

I SWEAR.

CHAPTER I.

Scene: Home of Amos Northrop, Boston.

"DON'T; please don't; you must not do that — you have no right to kiss me," said a bright-faced young girl of twenty or twenty-one, as she withdrew herself from an embrace evidently just attempted by a handsome and stylishly dressed young man of decidedly English cut.

"What do you mean? Why this change? Has my bright little friend, whose broad-mindedness gave us such a clever little scene the other evening, suddenly turned to an ascetic stoic?"

"That's exactly the kind of a reply I expected," she answered. "The next thing to say is, 'I thought you were clever enough to understand that one need not be wholly lost, even though one be not a prude.'"

"Then why did you kiss me in the conservatory over at Mrs. Walling's the other night?" he asked, with a half injured air.

She turned as if to answer him, and then hesitated and began twirling the lace on her gown.

Up to the time of the advent of Paul Morrison into her life, Fanny Northrop had considered herself absolutely invincible in flirtations. The results of her last year's experience in society at home and at the seashore gave her good reason for so thinking. Her success was the occasion of considerable astonishment among the dowagers and chaperones of Boston's best society,

who considered the easy, familiar air with which she met her gentlemen friends as proof positive that a four years' stay in California, from which she had but recently returned, had so worn off the esthetic finish of her Boston training as to wholly ruin her chances of interesting Boston society men.

But since Paul Morrison's appearance on the social horizon, she had been taught to know that there were men worthy of her steel.

Paul Morrison was an Englishman, about twenty-six years old, a graduate of Oxford, and had been introduced to the Somerset Club by Eyrle Vansandt, so he must have brought good letters from England. He spent a great deal of money, and (*mirabile dictu!*) paid his bills, consequently was accepted as wealthy.

Fanny Northrop had long since had practical demonstration of the fact that he danced well, played billiards and lawn tennis well, and had she the time and inclination to recall the happenings of the past summer at Bar Harbor, and more particularly a certain tender scene in a secluded corner of Mrs. Walling's conservatory, to which reference had been made, she would have admitted that he "spooned" well. Altogether, he was the brightest and cleverest man she had met since her return from California — had just enough English about him to make him interesting, and not so much as to make him a boor; was dissipated enough to show that he had life in him, and not enough to be a roué; paid his attentions with enough nonchalance to show that other girls had liked him before, and yet with enough ardency for her to think him sincere.

In fact, had she not known that Morrison had been paying marked attentions to her cousin Wawona Brooke, who was her father's ward, she would probably have admitted to herself that she was in love with him. Truth

to tell, she had planned this interview with the idea of determining whether or not he was engaged to marry her cousin:

She had suspicions that, during the two weeks which had elapsed since the Walling party, he had proposed to her cousin; and she also had suspicions that he had suspicions that she was more in love with him than she cared to acknowledge; and so she took this her first opportunity, to cross-examine him, with the idea that in case her suspicions proved true with reference to his engagement to her cousin, she could attempt to dissolve these latter suspicions in his mind.

It was a Sunday evening in May. She was dressed in a soft white afternoon gown, made for the summer at the seashore, donned that afternoon from a passing fancy. Ordinarily, she would have changed it for a dress more suitable for the evening; but as this was the first chance she had had of being wholly alone with Morrison since that memorable night, she determined to make the most of her time before she was interrupted. Besides, she wanted to try the effect of that dress on him. In it, as she well knew, she was enough to bring out the artistic appreciation of even the most hardened flirt.

So she had met him at the door herself, and ushered him into a cozy little apartment off the parlor, half smoking-room, half library, affectionately called "the den" by those intimate friends of the Northrop family who had the good fortune to have the entrée within its sacred portals. It was nearly twilight, and before they were fairly in the room a servant had come into the parlor to light the gas. On hearing her, Fanny had abruptly interrupted the formal nothings with which he was greeting her, by suddenly turning to a large Vienna music-box which stood in the corner, and started it playing, and then when her servant pulled aside the portiere which

connected "the den" with the parlor, said in an off-hand way :

"No, you need not light the gas in here. Mr. Morrison and I will only wait to hear this cylinder through, and then return to the parlor."

It was no wonder, then, that he had mentally assured himself of a very interesting and charming repetition, with complete and perfect stage setting, of the scene in the conservatory, which had already taken a place amongst his many little remembrances of "confidences in external expressions of affection," as a charming and popular society chaperone friend euphemistically termed such scenes.

So when he had carelessly sauntered over to the large easy-chair against the arm of which she half reclined, and in contrast with the red covering of which she made a charming and altogether enticing picture in the dim light which was reflected through a slight opening in the portieres, and attempted an embrace with the ill success just related, he was nonplused, assumed an injured air, put both hands in his trousers pockets, leaned up against the mantel, and quietly surveyed the beautiful girl in a quizzing sort of way, waiting for an answer to his last question.

She did not seem to be in a hurry to give it.

She twirled and twisted the lace on her gown over and over again, evidently in a deep study.

Not a word was spoken by either. His eyes seemed riveted on her.

Suddenly the music-box stopped. The silence became oppressive.

She took up a new cylinder of light waltz tunes and started the box playing again ; then suddenly turned to him and said :

"You don't respect me now nearly as much as you did before you kissed me, do you?"

"I am awfully sorry you asked that, Miss Northrop," he said in an injured tone.

"Why?" she said quickly, surprised at his peculiar answer.

"Because it is so like every other girl I ever kissed," he replied with exaggerated nonchalance.

"They all say that sooner or later, and I thought you were original enough and broad-minded enough not to run into that strain," he added, with a tone of considerable earnestness. "Really, if you only knew what charms your originality in taking scenes, and the absence of use of those much-worn formulas of girls who have let you kiss them and want to impress on you that they have done you a great favor, have for me, you would immediately ask me to forget you had asked it."

She did not answer, so he continued :

"As a matter of fact, I can almost go through the whole list of formulas, from 'You don't respect me' down to 'What would you do if you found your sister in such a situation?' Every man will tell you the same thing. Please now drop the stoic, and come back to common-sense broad-mindedness."

"Well, that is all very clever and bright, and you have turned the subject of conversation very neatly, but —"

She hesitated, and immediately a peculiar expression came over her face as she again took to twirling her lace. Finally she continued :

"But now redeem your boast of the other night—that you never told a young lady friend a lie in your life, and answer my question, even though it be a 'chestnut,' as the boys say in California."

Before he could answer, however, she quickly turned and looked at him, as she said :

"That last speech was the most egotistical I ever heard. 'Every girl I ever kissed,' to be sure! I suppose they can be counted by the thousands. I do hate 'men flirts,' and here you are boasting of your experience in that line, and to my face, too."

"I have understood women always dislike their male prototypes," he answered, trying to appear testy as an excuse to divert her mind from her question, for as surmised, he bore a very interesting position toward her cousin; in fact, because of his relations to Miss Brooke he found considerable trouble in giving a safe answer.

She, however, was too clever and too much in earnest to be so easily distracted.

"No, no! come back and answer my question. Do you respect me as much as you did before you kissed me?" she said deliberately and determinedly.

He stood and thought—pushed the money in his pocket over and over again, each piece making a direct snap as it parted from the others. It was now evident to her that he did not desire to answer the question.

Finally he went slowly over and took her cheeks in his hands, and looked down into her eyes for a full minute. She returned his gaze as if trying to divine his object. Neither spoke. At last he bent his head to kiss her.

Just before his mustache touched her lips, she drew her head back and said:

"No, I want your answer."

He resumed his air of study and his place at the mantel, and his hands resumed their place in his trousers pockets.

After a while he said, as if having settled a long debate:

"Yes, I do. I always respect consistency. You know that you have a strong will, and that your will controls your passions. You know also that I am a gentleman —

a man of breeding, and that your command will prevent me from continuing in a course antagonistic to your expressed desire. If you like a beautiful horse, a pretty dog, or a lovely cat, you like to caress it. So with me. If I see a pretty girl, bright, original and clever, I like to caress her. And, if she likes the caress — free from any passion — on the same principle as the horse, the dog, or the cat, why I hold her in respect even though she permit the caress."

"But our chaperones say it is impossible ; passion is the motive power in the affection of all humans," she replied, as she looked steadfastly at her hands.

"Not in all. It depends on the will power of the individual," he said slowly, as if hesitating whether to continue ; and then finally added with an air which indicated that he had made up his mind upon the course to pursue : "There are two kinds of kisses : one, the end — the finishing, complete acme of one course of action ; the other, the initiative — the introduction to another course, the heightened fervor of whose acme causes the kiss to fade into insignificance."

At this she looked up at him for the first time ; only a quick, furtive glance out of the corners of her eyes, which she immediately lowered.

"I speak plainly, because I want honestly to explain my position," he continued. "Educated in the modern school as you are, with ready access to Ouida, Zola, Balzac, Tolstoi, and Amelie Rives, you are not altogether ignorant of the existence of a master passion in humanity. Now, there is not the least infinitesimal possibility of a doubt that our kiss comes in the former class, and there is no reason save an unwritten custom why I should not kiss you. If you were a married woman, with absolutely definite, man-made, law-manufactured reasons why you should not permit me to kiss you, and you

then did, there would in that act itself be sufficient indication that your passion had control over your will to prove that our kiss should be placed among the latter class. And in that event I frankly admit the probabilities are, that my desire to have my kiss fade into insignificance, according to the rules just laid down, would cause me to become so certain of the completion of the remaining acts of the series that I would forget the kiss itself was innocent, and lose respect."

She looked up at him through the corners of her eyes several times during the course of his diatribe, but when he had finished, continued to sit and look at her hands for a few minutes. Finally she turned and looked intently at him with a sharp expression to her eyes.

He did not try to evade the gaze; in fact returned it, in an earnest, inquiring way for a time, and then smiled.

She tried to appear obdurate, but at last smiled also.

He then sauntered over to her, took her hand, drew her over to him very close, and said :

"If love is a crime, — a sinful passion,
Then why did our God, so good and so wise,
Make man's heart after such a peculiar fashion
That naught but love e'er satisfies?"

As he finished the quotation, he drew her over still closer and kissed her.

This brought her to her feet; she withdrew herself from his embrace, and said in a serious voice :

"But, just the same, when you want to marry a girl you are very careful to pick out one who has not been broad-minded, as you call it."

"Why, Fanny, what is the matter?" he said. "I hope you do not consider this a personal discussion."

"No, no, do not evade me that way," she answered, still more seriously. "Let us talk sense: when we girls

do, you, like all the rest of the Somerset Club men, successful flirts that you are, jest and evade everything which tends to disappoint you in your desires. It is all in unison with your ideas, as you have just given them.

"You lay out a great plain of society, and over on the edge of that plain you put a chasm which divides us poor girls from a something, the nature of which we know of only in a story-book sort of a way.

"On the brink of that chasm is a barbed-wire fence. We poor girls have an idea there is something very interesting over the brink of the chasm. Our worthy mammas and all our good old maid friends and chaperones instruct us to keep on the straight and narrow paths, which lead, by more or less divergent ways, to a gate in the fence carefully guarded by a marriage license clerk and a minister ; while we giddy little things are tempted, *tout de même*, to gambol off to get a look over the chasm before we get to the gate. And we always can find some of you interesting and philosophizing flirts of club men to assist us in getting as close to the barbs as possible. If we have strength of character enough to get back into the paths without getting scratched, or any of our chaperones detecting our wandering, all well and good ; and sooner or later we find some meek and sweet young man, who either has n't knowledge of life enough to know that there is a barbed-wire fence out there, or else has no idea that we know it, and on we go through the gate with him. But you know as well as I do, that the chances are ten to one that you, who assist us over toward the barbs, when you get back to the paths, choose another girl who either is so innocent that she does not know of the barbs, or else is clever enough to hide the fact that she is not thus innocent, and quietly meander through the gate with her. Now be honest, — don't you?"

He winced several times during the course of her speech, for he saw that she had him cornered.

He tried to turn it off.

"Oh, well, if you are going to run along and question a man concerning things he has never thought about, I suppose the best thing to do is to commence with Whewell's Moral Philosophy, and get coached on the subject well enough to answer your question."

She saw from this that he was trying to evade her attempts at finding out whether he was engaged to Wawona, and so did not answer for a few minutes, but returned to the pastime of twirling the lace on her dress.

The music-box had stopped, but neither of them seemed to notice it. Each was too engrossed in the pastime of trying to fathom the thoughts of the other.

She cannot bring herself to believe that he is engaged to her cousin, because he is willing to carry on such a desperate flirtation with her at the same time. She begins to realize that she would like to have him very much interested in herself, but was not exactly certain whether she cared enough for him to marry him.

However, in the last few seconds she had made up her mind that she did not want him to feel that he was coming off best in the little tilt of affection which the flirtation now amounted to. She determined, therefore, not to pursue the advantage she had gained, but to attempt to learn his position in another way.

So she turned to him, and in a frank tone said :

"Now, Mr. Morrison, I want to ask a really straightforward question."

He did not answer, but assumed a waiting expression.

"Am I more interested in you than you in me?"

He would have given a great deal to have had time to study her intent, but fearful that she might return to the

other line of conversation in which she had just cornered him, he hastened to answer :

"Most certainly no, else why should I have acted as I have?"

Then, as an excuse to give him time to collect his thoughts, he turned and wound up the music-box. It began playing a popular waltz. After a time an expression came over his face which showed that he had caught an idea.

He turned to her and said :

"What a lovely waltz. Do you know, I think 'My Queen' is the best marked time I ever danced to? It is the same music we had over at Walling's the other night. Can't we have a trifle of a waltz now?"

"But it is Sunday night," she said, doubting whether his desire to waltz was his only object.

"Oh, come along, anyhow."

He took her by the hand, and assumed a waltzing position, which she permitted in a passive way.

Then having her thus, he said :

"But you really do not want to break the Sabbath?"

He did not release her, however.

She now saw that the position really amounted to an embrace.

Her first impulse was not to permit it; then a wayward feeling took possession of her, and, for a moment forgetful of her main object, she realized that she enjoyed the position.

"I suppose we ought not to dance, as papa objects so," she answered, as she involuntarily nestled closer in her already close quarters.

"Then, as I cannot kiss you, and cannot dance with you," he said, as he dropped his left arm from its dancing position to join his right, which was already round her waist, "I presume we had better return to the parlor."

Nevertheless, he did not loosen his hold nor attempt to move.

"But suppose I don't want to?" she asked, suddenly looking up at him, with her face dangerously near his.

"Well, then, we won't!" he answered, as he impetuously drew her up to him and kissed her once, twice, a dozen times.

Suddenly he held her off at arms' length an instant, and they both smiled.

Then he said: "Well, you are a conundrum."

"I know it," she said; "and you are another."

He turned to the mantel, leaned back against it, and drew her, a not unwilling prisoner, once more into his arms, in a very warm embrace.

She was fully in unison.

"Well," she said, after a few minutes' revelry, "this is a nice set of spoons. I think I had better be looking for the barbed-wire fence. Here, my hair is all ruffled, my bangs out, my face flushed, and pulse throbbing. You had better take those kisses back, and I will run up stairs and change my dress."

Hardly had she said this, when "Um-m-m" sounded from the parlor in a man's deep voice.

She sprang from him with a look of horror.

"Great heavens!" she exclaimed, in a terrified whisper, "it's my father!"

He realized that it was time for action.

"Pretend we were dancing. Come in with me; I will do the talking," he interjectedly whispered, as he pulled her hand through his arm, and opening the portiere made his entrance into the back parlor.

A more shame-faced, childishly awkward picture than that young man and young woman made could not be imagined.

Amos Northrop stood out in the center of the room,

his face the picture of suppressed rage and disgust. The silence could almost be felt.

Finally Morrison summoned up courage enough to say, as he drew his handkerchief from his pocket and wiped his forehead in a conspicuous manner :

"I suppose we can expect a well-deserved lecture for dancing on Sunday night ; but really, if you only knew what a charming waltzer Miss Northrop is, and could appreciate the truly wonderful time kept by your music-box, I feel that you could almost forgive me for having induced your daughter to dance with me, even on Sunday night."

The banker continued to look at him coldly, without saying a word.

Fanny withdrew her arm from his and moved over to the piano, and stood there nervously fingering her bangles.

Morrison returned Mr. Northrop's gaze as best he could, trying nobly to keep up appearances.

Finally the father broke the silence by saying in a frigidly cold, sarcastic voice :

"I do not think I should, sir. But if I attempted to dance, I should expect the young lady to have sufficient respect for her good name, if not for herself, to have light enough so that it might be evident I could dance without endangering the furniture."

Then, turning to Fanny, he added in the same sarcastic tone :

"The nursery is upstairs. You can have Parker put you to bed. I will return you to school soon, so that you may learn what is due from a young lady of good family."

As she started to shame-facedly leave the room, he added :

"And you had better choose a companion next time .

who is not so egotistical as to think he can mislead others by untrue innuendo."

Immediately there came a revolution of feeling, for he detained her with :

"No, wait a moment ; I presume you had better wish 'good night' to your guest."

"Mr. Northrop, you misunderstand the situation," Morrison tried to say. "I called to see you, and can explain—"

"Not at present," interrupted the banker. "I consider scenes ill-bred."

"Good night. I will explain at another time, then," answered Morrison, as the banker turned and walked over to the door of the back parlor.

Morrison politely again said "Good night," as he bowed himself out.

Mr. Northrop waited until Fanny had, without a word other than "Good night," shaken hands with Morrison at the front door.

When the door closed the banker turned and entered his private study, within whose sacred portals the family seldom intruded under ordinary circumstances, and Fanny knew that it was best not to do so at present, even if she had not been too glad to run up to her own room and have a good cry.

Amos Northrop dropped into his office chair, a troubled look overshadowing his face. He sat there lost in thought for a considerable time.

For a man with his active business life and outside distractions, he was more than ordinarily conversant with the little social happenings of his household. Fanny had been a source of great worryment to him ever since her mother's death, five years before. He had been considerably relieved when her aunt, Mrs. Florence Gaylord,

of San Francisco, had invited her to make an extended visit in California.

On her return he had hoped that Fanny and her cousin Wawona might become intimate friends. But while they were on the very best of terms, there never seemed to be that spontaneity of fellowship which bespeaks complete unanimity of feeling. Each had her circle of callers and admirers, and, until the arrival of Paul Morrison, there had never appeared to be anything like rivalry between them. Miss Brooke's friends were all inclined to literature and the arts, and Fanny's to inclinations which brought out the lighter capabilities of the mind.

Morrison's attentions to Wawona had assumed such a shape that he had quietly made inquiries concerning him, and found that, so far as family connections and finances were concerned, he was a very desirable *parti*. But he also found that he and Fanny were on better terms than seemed consistent with his intentions toward Miss Brooke.

Had he not been Wawona's guardian, and known that outside of her mother's share of his father's estate, some twenty-five thousand dollars, she had nothing except an unknown possibility of something from her father's possessions in the Indian Territory, which, on account of the peculiar shape of the title and the Indian laws, seemed to him valueless, he would have been convinced that Morrison was actuated by financial considerations. As it was, the thought that Fanny's dowry would undoubtedly exceed Wawona's expectations very greatly, removed this theory, and left him in a great quandary, as he could evolve no other.

It was not his policy to talk to his wards of their private affairs, so he quietly waited for matters to form themselves. He now felt that they were about to take definite shape.

Morrison's two-facedness had occasioned a feeling of antipathy in the mind of the straightforward, honest banker. He almost dreaded a meeting with him, for as he had remarked to that unfortunate young man, he disliked "scenes."

He knew that Wawona Brooke was completely oblivious to the flirtation which he was carrying on with Fanny, but dared not say anything to her ; both because he was not certain that there was anything definite in Morrison's intentions, and also because he had been afraid of antagonizing her, being fearful that some of her Indian traits would assert themselves. Up to this time, her education and refined surroundings had but brought out the nobler qualities of her nature, and he feared to attempt anything which in anyway might cause her to exert the savage and lower traits of her mind — which he feared antagonism to any much desired wish would do.

Finally, he threw it all off his mind with a deep sigh of relief, when the thought came to him that neither of his wards had been asked for, and that he might be "crossing a bridge twice." Then he turned to his reading, with the determination not to worry until affairs developed themselves more fully.

CHAPTER II.

FANNY NORTHROP lay on her bed with her face in her hands, and sobbed until she was physically weary of sobbing.

At last she sat up, rubbed her eyes, lit the gas, and then went back and sat on the edge of the bed, with her right knee embraced between her hands.

She finally looked up, and caught the image of herself in the mirror on her bureau.

The disheveled appearance of that image impressed itself upon her, and she addressed it tearfully and hysterically :

"Well, you are an old goose ! Here you are with half a dozen men ready to pay you any kind of attention ; three half daft over you, and one a perfect slave ; and yet you go off and make a regular fool of yourself with a man who is trifling either with you or your cousin."

"Yes," she said quite vehemently, "and get yourself into such a situation that your dear old father will mistrust everything you do hereafter."

Then she sat and watched a tear trickle down the face of the image, as she tried to make up her mind what that dear old father was thinking about at that moment.

Finally she dashed the tear off her cheek, and turned again to lecture the image :

"So you are a 'job lot,' are you ? Let a man say, 'that is just what every girl I ever kissed says !' Well, it has taught you one thing, my girl ; you are getting about old enough to stop this giddy nonsense. Besides you stand in imminent danger of having the world say you're jilted, my pretty miss."

This funereal attempt at jollity was followed by another silence with its staring accompaniment, as she wondered whether or not he was engaged to Wawona Brooke.

At this, she fell to analyzing her own feelings toward Morrison, and had about made up her mind that she was really in love with him, and had sufficiently let her desire work on her reason to cause her to be in doubt whether her father's appearance and termination of the scene had not prevented him from expressing a similar emotion for her, when she heard a tap at the door.

She hastily concluded that her father had come up to have a talk with her—something he had never done before in his life.

Her heart seemed to leap to her mouth and her knees to weaken.

She realized that she must do something to alter her appearance. She jumped to her feet, hastily tried to powder up her eyes to remove the tell-tale traces of her emotion, and then, as an excuse for her delay, suddenly tumbled down her hair, put two or three hairpins in her mouth for effect, and half smotheredly called from in front of her bureau :

"Come in !"

The door opened, and much to her relief in came Wawona Brooke, with her hat and walking-coat still on.

"What in the world is the matter, Fanny? Everything seems to be disarranged, the gas is burning full head in the parlor, and not a soul there. Uncle is locked up in his room and would not admit me. Frank suggested that a burglar had probably gotten in and kidnaped the whole family."

A thousand thoughts flooded poor Fanny's mind.

Would it be better to "pump" Wawona now, or wait until she should make up her mind whether to carry out Morrison's lie about the dancing?

At first she determined to try "now," for she thought that if her father said anything about the scene in the early part of the evening, she had better prepare Wawona for it. This latter thought she dismissed at once, however, because she knew that her father's dislike to scenes would prevent him ever referring to the matter. And, therefore, she hastily reasoned, it would never reach Wawona—as, of course, Morrison would be the last person in the world to refer to it.

Thus occupied with her thoughts, she said not a word until she had finished doing up her hair, and then conspicuously inserting the hairpins she held in her mouth, to be certain that her cousin should observe the excuse for her silence, she answered, without turning around:

"Oh, nothing; I was down in the parlor. Take a seat, I'll be through in a second."

Then once more taking an inventory of her eyes, to be sure there were no traces of tears apparent, she turned to her cousin and said:

"You see, I got one of my harum-scarum ideas in my head to try to see how Ethel Servier's scheme for dressing the hair would go with this frock; so I ran up to try and forgot all about the gas. I am always doing something impulsive that way, ain't I, Wawona?"

"I am really beginning to get afraid of myself in my impulsive moods," she continued, with a listless air, which showed that her thoughts were back on the happenings of an hour before, notwithstanding her brave attempts at nonchalance.

"But why do you not restrain your impulses, my dear?" Wawona answered. "Why do you not exercise your will power?"

Fanny saw that if she was to learn anything from her cousin, she must take the initiative at once, and turn the subject of conversation into another channel.

"Are you never impulsive, Wawona?"

"No, Fanny, I am not given to impulses. And to be really frank with you, it does not seem to me to be entirely well-bred to act on first impulses. I do not mean to say that one cannot be natural without being ill-bred; but what I want to say is, that we often do things that are awkward, and say things that are unnecessarily brusque, from following first impulses," answered Miss Brooke, wondering what had come over her cousin, for her distraught manner proclaimed that something was troubling her mind.

Fanny also realized that her efforts to appear indifferent and undisturbed were not entirely successful. So, as she saw no other resource to divert the conversation from her own affairs, she plunged into this discussion:

"Do you mean to say that one must throttle every desire and natural inclination, and study the effect on others, before they decide whether or not to act? Why, we would be a nice lot of long-faced Quakers if we followed that rule. Now, I will confess that I am never so tired of myself as when I have been doing the 'exceeding proper,' as, for instance, calling on Ethel Servier's aunt, Mrs. Springster, who has just returned from a two years' visit to a brother in England, who is a baronet, or a duke, or something like that. Really, at such times I begin to doubt if I am a human being or a mere talking automaton. It may not be well-bred to be impulsive, Wawona, but it is honest. When you have talked over a person or subject with me in my impulsive moods, you have my real, true, honest ideas; but when you have finished a discussion with Mrs. Springster, you have merely gotten what she thinks ought to be the sentiments of that conscienceless and indefinable class known as well-bred people. As for me," she said warmly, now that she felt that she had turned the conversation into lines which

dissolved any suspicions which her cousin may have had of wet eyes, "give me for friends or companions the people who appreciate and do things because their own ideas and their own desires impel them, and not because they think it is the 'proper caper' to do so."

Wawona Brooke was somewhat surprised at the amount of thought displayed by her cousin, and felt that she had misjudged her to a certain extent, and was trying to formulate an answer, when the necessity for it was prevented by Fanny turning to her, and saying in an off-hand, girlish way :

"Mr. Morrison was here tonight."

Had she not been so interested in her own thoughts, she might have noticed that Fanny watched her very closely to see the effect the announcement would have upon her.

As it was, Wawona answered quite unconcernedly :

"I expected he would be," and then added: "Did he have a chance to see Uncle Amos?"

"No, why?" said Fanny, trying to repress the beating of her heart, which she felt certain her cousin must hear, because it sounded so distinctly to herself.

"Well, I suppose I ought to make a confidante of you, Fanny," she said thoughtfully, not having noticed anything out of the way in Fanny's manner,—“and I cannot determine exactly how to commence, as it is my first experience in such matters. But I suppose the best way to do is to accept your theory, and follow first impulses, so I will begin. Mr. Morrison has proposed to me, and I have consented to allow him to ask the permission of your father, as my guardian, to our marriage. There!" she said, looking up at Fanny, "I suppose you think that frightfully ill-bred and lacking in impulse, but nevertheless it is my way."

Fanny wondered what Wawona's feelings would be, if she could realize what those few words meant to her.

There came over her a sort of numbness—a feeling as though her thoughts had become chaotically entangled. She could not tell where to begin to disentangle them.

She had been prepared for something like this announcement for the last week ; but now that it had come, it fairly stunned her.

The thought flashed across her mind that she must congratulate her cousin at once, or else arouse her suspicions. She hardly dared to trust herself, but finally summoning up all the *sang froid* she could, said hesitatingly :

“Allow me to congratulate you, my dear Wawona ; are you sure he is good enough for you ? ”

She knew that she ought to kiss her, but hardly dared to trust her emotions so far.

“Of course he is good enough for me. What a peculiar question,” Wawona answered, without taking her eyes from the purse she held in her hands, a position she had assumed after having made her announcement to Fanny.

“Do you know, I think everything about this courtship has been peculiar ? We have been, from the first, more than ordinarily interested in each other, yet he has kissed me but once, and then he seemed to feel as if he ought to apologize for doing it.”

Kissed her but once ! And yet kissed me fifty times tonight ! What can he mean ? came over the poor girl's mind, as she tried bravely to check her emotions.

Again she realized that she must do something, or her courage would fail her. So, with a mighty effort at nonchalance, she said :

“Why does it seem so strange ? Are you accustomed to being kissed more than once ? ”

Immediately after she had asked the question, she

would have given half her chances of heaven to have it unsaid ; for Wawona blushed, became very confused, and having looked down intently at the purse in her hand for a few minutes, began to nervously open and shut it, as if trying to determine what and how to answer. Finally she said in a slow and measured way :

"No: you know, Fanny, I am not accustomed to being kissed."

"There, there, Wawona, that was only a joke. Of course not ; I only meant that in fun. Don't be angry with me," hurriedly returned Fanny, fearful that in her desire to dispel her own uneasiness, she had caused her cousin, whom in reality she dearly loved, more confusion than she really intended.

Wawona felt that she had shown more temper than she should, and answered :

"Oh, no, that is all right, my dear little cousin. That was not the occasion of my hesitation. Truth to tell, I was deliberating whether to confide a little happening in my life, when I was kissed. And as you are the only person to whom I ever gave confidence, I suppose I might."

"Oh, please do. I just love confidences ; and I know how to keep them, too, if I am a girl," she said, something of her old piquancy having returned, now that she felt assured that her feelings had escaped detection.

"Yes, I know you can," Wawona said deliberately, as if weighing in her mind how to proceed.

"And as this one is so dear a confidence, I want you to be more than usually circumspect. Do you remember that I was once very much in love with a young senior at Harvard?

"Oh, yes ! We all thought you were engaged to him," said Fanny, glad to know that the confidence had nothing to do with herself.

"Let me see ; what was his name ? I have forgotten it."

"No, I do not want to recall his name to you," replied her cousin, "because I prefer the confidence to be impersonal. Have you any remembrance of how he looked at all ? Did it ever strike you that Paul Morrison looked like him ?"

Fanny found herself unconsciously flinching at the mention of Morrison's name. She had just been confidently assuring herself that her self-possession had returned, when this allusion to him somewhat disconcerted her.

She gave a hurried glance at her cousin, to see if there was any suspicion of her feelings, but found her still intently gazing at her purse, whose clasp she continued to open and shut, in her nervousness.

Finally Fanny said, bravely returning to the subject : "No ; but that probably explains why I always had a feeling that I had known Mr. Morrison before."

Then, to direct the conversation away from danger to herself, she said :

"But about our little confidence, Wawona ?"

She went over and put her arm around her cousin's waist, now completely at ease, for she was assured there was no suspicion of her own position in the matter.

"Well," Wawona answered, as she turned and kissed her cousin in a very impetuous manner for her, as if her thoughts had completely undermined her usual composure : "Yes, I was kissed by a man, and I think I shall remember the kiss to my dying day. You recall when I went to Susie DeMarques's wedding in Albany, before I started for the White Mountains that summer ?"

"Yes, I remember the exact day ; it was two days after your class went to Harvard," Fanny answered, interestingly.

"Well, Paul — there," Wawona said, blushing a deep red, "I did n't intend to use his name, but I suppose the least said, the soonest mended. Paul came down to the train to see us off. I remember now, you did not go, because you were going to a party or something, so only Uncle Amos and I went. Finally, Paul made up his mind to run down a couple of stations with us. It was the old "New York express," and left at 7:55 in the evening. Every single detail of that long ride is distinctly fixed in my memory, you see," she said, hesitating a moment, as if trying to determine whether to continue.

With a little toss of her head, she added :

"I never was so blissfully happy in my life. He kept going from one station to the next, until it was so late that the porter had made up most of the berths in our sleeper," she hesitated again, and Fanny nestled closer to her, without saying a word, a mark of affection, by the way, which produced the desired result, for Wawona continued :

"I knew he wanted to propose, and I wanted him to do so. I felt, too, that he thought it would be premature. At last, at Springfield, (I remember as well as if it had been yesterday,) he said : "Well, I suppose the porter will be putting me off by force, unless I go." Then he arose and shook hands with me. It was almost eleven o'clock. As I say, he had kept on going from station to station for the last two hours. The rest of the party except your father had retired an hour before. You know what a lovely chaperone your father is — he sat in a seat just ahead of us, reading. Paul went up and bade him good-night. Then he came back to shake hands with me again. The porter was in the little smoking-room at the other end of the car.

"As Paul took my hand, I seemed to feel my whole being warm toward him. I arose and intended to walk with him

to the platform, and see him off. You remember what an odd little narrow passage there is at the end of a Pullman car, with little swinging doors at both ends. Well, when we got in there, he still had my hand, and it seemed to me that I was never so sorry to part with any one in my life. He appeared to feel so, too, for he stopped, turned, took my other hand and said: 'I suppose I may not see you for three long months. It will seem like an age to me. Good-by!' Then he hesitated a little, turned again, and — took me in his arms, and said: 'Sweetheart!' Then he kissed me; and then" — she stopped, apparently trying to determine whether to proceed.

Fanny prompted. "Yes, and —"

"Well, I kissed him, twice. It was only a brief little second, Fanny, but it has passed into my memory as the way a man ought to propose."

Her voice had gradually assumed a sad tone, as if the reminiscence brought regret; but she dashed the feeling aside, and turning to her cousin, said earnestly:

"Do not for the world ever refer to this, for it is, of course, the dearest memory of my life — it is one of the idols of my memory, an idol which I worship as I fancy the Hindoos worship Vishnu."

"That almost amounted to an engagement, did n't it?" said Fanny. "How was it broken?"

"Well," Wawona replied, "I will merely say that there was a peculiar estrangement, and we have never seen each other since," adding, half beneath her breath, "to speak."

Both sat there, without saying a word, for quite a time, each wrapped in her own thoughts.

Then Wawona roused herself and said: "Come, kiss me good-night, and say something pretty."

"Are you sure he is not Mr. Morrison, Wawona? Would n't it be romantic if it should turn out to be your Harvard lover?"

"Oh, yes, I am certain of that : Mr. Morrison is so English in his ideas. But I will confess I never before saw such a resemblance in appearance between two people in my life. No, we cannot give you that chapter for a romance."

She again turned and kissed her cousin.

"Now, good-night, dear."

"Good-night," replied Fanny.

Miss Brooke arose to leave the room, but hesitated a moment, and said :

"You have not told me yet whether he saw Uncle Amos. I want to find out if I am really and truly engaged."

Fanny started. Poor girl, she had never told a direct lie in her life, and now here she was almost forced into one. If not, she must confess her own weakness, and at the same time ruin the peace of her cousin's married life. Then, remembering she had already determined that the scene would never be referred to again by either her father or Morrison, she summoned all her self-possession to answer with technical correctness :

"I think papa had something else on his mind, and put the interview off till another time."

"Oh, well, I suppose I must wait," Wawona answered, and after another "good-night" she stooped and kissed her cousin once more.

"Sleep well," she added, as she closed the door.

Sleep well ! The idea of that poor little harrassed mind sleeping well.

Fanny locked the door, let down her hair, ran her hands through her bangs two or three times in a hysterical sort of a way, and walked up and down the room, trying to gather her scattered thoughts, and recover from the nervousness which the restraint of her feelings for

the last fifteen minutes had brought on, now that the necessity for restraint had been removed.

"He, of course, thinks he has jilted me, and that I am dying from a broken heart. How can I prevent it?" she said half aloud.

"Proposed to Wawona and kissed her only once, and yet he has kissed me a hundred times!" she murmured, as she suddenly came to a halt in her pacing up and down the room. "What is he thinking about? What can he think of me? Why does he do it?" came flitting through her mind. "He cannot think I am bad—I know he does not, for he always classed our kisses among the former of his category of this evening."

She stopped and studied as if trying to follow a thought.

"Is he in love with me, and marrying Wawona for some other reason?" she finally said.

"No, he cannot be marrying Wawona for her money, for I will have more than she. Yet if he loves her more than me, why has he shown his affection to me externally more than to her?"

Her thoughts crowded upon her so fast that she gave up all idea of thinking. She would have given the world to have been able to run over to Ethel Servier, her most intimate friend, have a good cry, confide the whole matter to her, and receive her condolence.

She was about to make up her mind to do so, late as it was, when she suddenly determined that nobody should know of this—not even Ethel; that this must be one of her thoughts sacred to herself, and she found herself quoting a little scrap of newspaper doggerel:

"Your goods, buy them, sell them in the mart;
Of your fortune to the poor give a part;
Blessings on the open pocket;
But your secret, keep it, lock it
In your heart."

After a little time she regained her composure, and sat upright on the bed, where she had thrown herself.

She began to try to analyze and understand her own feelings.

She knew herself to be an "odd girl," and even felt that she was at times erratically improper, if the straight-laced of the world be mathematically correct in their various notions of right and wrong, propriety and impropriety.

At this particular moment in her short life she seemed to herself more odd than ever. Her feeling in regard to Morrison was one which she could not analyze with any degree of satisfaction to her own mind. That she was interested in him,—greatly interested,—was beyond peradventure; but was there love, or any spark of love in it? That was what bothered her just now. She knew that in him or in her relations to and with him she had realized—more than ever before—two cardinal principles as component, not to say vital, phases in the composition of her womanhood. The first, that, in common with the world at large, in conformity with the principle, *Natura abhorret vacuum*, her nature demanded that she be interested in some one, to escape from having an omnipresent longing, amounting to a social void; and second, that when with Paul Morrison, she found her particular void filled, as it had never been before in all her life. Whether it was that she needed the excitement of the natural antagonism of the sexes, and he furnished it in a greater degree than any other man whom she had chanced to meet, or whether there was a deeper, grander arousing of her nature—whether her love had budded—that was the question.

As she sat there, working at her problem, the lines of that singer whose earlier work promised so much from his genius, and whose latter songs so unhappily failed

to bear out the promise, ran through her mind, as she recalled Owen Meredith's "Lucille."

"In Rome—in the Forum—there open'd one night,
A gulf. All the augurs turned pale at the sight.
In this omen the anger of heaven they read.
Men consulted the gods ; then the oracle said :
'Ever open this gulf shall endure, till at last
That which Rome hath most precious, within it be cast.'
The Romans threw in it their corn and their stuff,
But the gulf yawn'd as wide. Rome seemed likely enough
To be ruined ere this rent in her heart she could choke.
Then Curtius, revering the oracle, spoke :
'O, Quirites ! To this Heaven's question is come !
What to Rome is most precious ? The manhood of Rome !'
He plunged,—and the gulf closed. The tale is not new,
But the moral applies many ways, and is true.
How, for hearts rent in twain, shall the curse be destroy'd ?
'Tis a warm human life that must fill up the void.
Through many a heart runs the rent in the fable ;
But who to discover a Curtius is able ?"

Fanny did not care to admit that her heart was "rent," and she was even trying to combat the thought which was impressing itself on her mind with almost uncontrollable force, that "'Tis a warm human life that must fill up the void" in her nature if life were to be worth the living. But was Morrison to be the Curtius ?

"Nonsense !" she said, as she roused up and recalled fully all she had so recently been told by Wawona. "This is not Salt Lake ; we are not Mormons ; nor could I share my love with another, even nominally. No, no ; a Curtius may be my greatest need ; indeed, I almost believe it is, but Mr. Paul Morrison is not he, by a long chalk."

Immediately came back the old thought :

"But how in the world am I to keep him from thinking I am dying of a broken heart ?"

She arose and moved over to her writing-desk, then sat down after a moment, and having put her elbows on the desk, dropped her chin into her upturned palms, and became lost in thought, gazing steadfastly before her. Finally she realized that she was looking straight at a bust picture of herself in full dress,—a photograph, by the way, which Morrison had pretended to admire very much in the proof, and one of which she had, at the time, promised him. The sight of it gave her a thought. She took down her paper, then wavered a moment, put the paper away and was about to close the desk, when just before it closed she stopped with her finger between the lid and desk, and hesitated again, as if arguing with herself whether or not to carry out the thought.

At last she opened it with an air which plainly said she had determined upon her course of action, and was going to carry out that course, if it was the last thing she did on earth.

"I shall get a letter to him tomorrow. I must get it to him before he confides anything of this to me," she said to herself, "else he will always think he has jilted me, as all the rest of my friends may."

Then she thought:

"Poor Wawona! She is the only one, in all probability, who does not know that he has been flirting with me."

At this she said aloud:

"Yes, the picture is all the excuse I need."

Her face assumed a more determined expression, now that she had decided upon her course of action, and she half forgot her sorrow in her anxiety over the composition of her letter.

She evolved the following:

"DEAR MR. MORRISON:

"I inclose you the picture of myself I promised you

about a week ago. I hope you will like it as well as you did the proof.

"Your call this evening was so charming and interesting that I find myself paraphrasing the quotation from Will Carleton's 'Gone with a Handsomer Man':

'To appreciate heaven well,
Just give a man about fifteen minutes of hell—'

into

'To appreciate hell on earth,
Just let a poor girl know a little of heaven's worth.'

"I guess our scene in 'the den' could be called a 'little of heaven' could n't it? And perhaps you think our scene with papa could be called a little of the other place.

"Now, do not think papa will ever refer to that matter again, because his hatred of 'scenes,' as he calls them, will prevent his ever speaking of it.

"By the way, I want to speak of another matter. Really, my dear friend, we must stop our little flirtation, interesting as it is. I suggest that we enter into an armistice. You see this might become a confirmed habit, and as we cannot keep it up forever, I suppose we had better determine on the terms of the truce the next time I see you. So be prepared to see me come down with the white flag flying, to indicate my intention to ask for a cessation of hostilities, the next time you call.

"Till which time, may it be soon, I am

"Yours sincerely,

"FANNY NORTHROP.

"BOSTON, May 26, 18—"

"There," she said with a feeling of keen satisfaction as she pushed the letter back, "he will never guess the girl who wrote that note was about to go to bed and cry her silly eyes out. I believe it did me good to write that

letter. I have almost regained my spirits. 'Armistice' sounds first rate; sort of looks as if I was shaking *him*."

Then she started to read it over again, but before she was half through gave a deep sigh, as she realized that joking to herself was not going to ease the matter any.

She felt that she was on the verge of another cry, and so with a mighty struggle shook off the despondency, and determined to go to bed and sleep over it.

This, however, she found was easier thought than done; for her active brain fancied a thousand different ways in which her friends might view the situation, and this kept her from sleeping, until at last she dropped to sleep.

In the morning she lay for a time trying to determine whether to forward the letter. She decided to send it without reading it again, as she feared a re-reading would cause another fit of the blues.

Before she arose, however, she made up her mind that it would not be safe for her to see Morrison again until she had had time to compose her feelings.

CHAPTER III.

EARLY in the fifties, Florence, the eldest sister of Amos Northrop, had married Charles Gaylord, a rising young Boston lawyer.

The young people became affected with the gold fever then lately become epidemic, and started for California.

On landing at San Francisco, the keen Yankee lawyer at once took in the situation, and realized that the city was some day to be the metropolis and shipping and distributing center for the whole of this new western coun-

try. Hence he made it a principle to obtain title to all the real estate he possibly could, and had several schemes on hand for the acquirement of acre property in the suburbs, when he was accidentally drowned.

This left his estate in an involved shape, for in his vaulting ambition he had mortgaged every present possession, in order to acquire more.

The widow arose to the occasion. Suddenly thrown on her own resources, she began to develop her worldly capabilities. Instead of being dependent on others, she gave her whole mind toward carrying out her husband's ideas herself. Thus she not only developed strong independence, but, with San Francisco's wonderful growth, reared a handsome fortune out of what, improperly handled, would have been a wrecked estate.

This financial independence had brought with it a complete self-reliance which extended into her very thought. She became a brilliant, brainy woman. None of the bounds which usually circumscribe women in their ambitions had any existence for her.

She acted for herself, thought for herself, chose friends for herself ; and everything about her entire household bore evidence of her striking individuality.

While caring little for the conventionalities which most society people deemed absolutely essential, she had a keen sense of honor. Her very freedom of thought caused her to be unusually strict in all she felt necessary to be true to herself.

A peculiar bond of friendship had grown up between Fanny and her aunt, during the four years they had been together. Mrs. Gaylord was very fond of the bright, happy, cheerful girl. In fact, her niece and her son Fred stood about equal in her affections. Nothing either of them wanted was ever denied.

One of her peculiar theories was never to permit tem-

porary local affairs to trouble her. Everything in her household was controlled on the idea of attaining happiness by causing discontentment to be absent. If Fred wanted to lie in bed in the morning,—all right, provided it did not interfere with his duties. If Fanny wanted to take the phaeton and be gone all day,—all right, provided she made proper explanations afterward.

Her whole idea of a happy household was to study what each of her charges desired, and permit them to do it, if there was nothing radically wrong in the doing.

“There is none of the ‘What will Mrs. Grundy say?’ atmosphere about my household,” she oftentimes said.

This kind indulgence made her very dear to Fanny, and they were the warmest of friends. Thus, gradually, the aunt’s mind and ways had formed an impression on the girl, and had obtained a material control over the peculiarly susceptible niece.

Since Fanny’s return as a young lady, her father had found her an interesting study. The influence of his sister was apparent. Alone with him the girl had shown that she had been thrown into the company of advanced thinkers, and had done considerable reading. At the same time, while with others, she seemed to hide all the fruits of her reading under a heedless, light address. Her life, vivacity, and originality made him very proud of her; and yet her almost absolute indifference to many of the conventional ideas which he had always considered indispensable almost shocked him.

This same butterfly jollity had captivated a considerable number of Boston’s four hundred. Among her numerous conquests—in fact, the one whom she had classed as “a perfect slave” in her tearful dialogue with her image—was Frank Jender, the son of a sister of the first wife of Amos Northrop.

Jender was a New York man, and was at that time a

junior at Harvard College. His relationship to Mr. Northrop gave him admission to the house at all hours, and the next morning after Fanny's unhappy experience he was on hand bright and early, to try to have an interview with her before he went out to his work at Cambridge.

Fanny had determined that she would run off for a trip somewhere, so as to escape the cross-questioning of her friends when the announcement of Wawona's engagement came, and hence was in no mood to entertain even "slaves." So, when Frank sauntered into the dining-room, she had prepared to retire to her own room.

"Where are you going, Fanny?" Frank asked, noticing the absence of her usual cordiality. "What's the matter with you, anyway? You have been treating me awfully cool of late."

Fanny saw that she was caught for a chat, because to evade it might arouse his suspicions of her recent unhappy defeat in a social battle—and that would never do in a "slave." She, therefore, determined to take the initiative, and turn the conversation wholly off her own affairs.

In order to create the impression that her mood was the direct converse of the one which the remembrance of her last night's experience had brought on, she assumed an artificially saucy, jaunty air.

"But I must do something to get rid of you, Frank. And really, the easiest way to do it is to be cold. Now Frank," she said, "won't you be sensible, and go away for a while and flirt with some other girl, and let me forget how much you are in love with me? I may really learn to like you, if you do."

Jender would probably have admired her for her honesty if he had not been the subject under discussion. As it was, he twirled his handsome mustache, straightened

up his boyish but athletic form to its full height of six feet two, and said with a forced dignity :

"Well, Miss Northrop, if I am so tiresome, I presume the best thing I can do is to say 'good day.' I suppose I may count this a rescinding of our engagement for Thursday. I offer you my most abject apology for having caused you the weariness of which you complain, and trust that the kindness I will do you hereafter by preventing myself from intruding on your highness' presence, will somewhat offset and make amends for your past sufferings."

"Oh, don't be a goose! Now, see here, Frank," she said, not content to let him go away angry, "you make just the nicest, dearest distant relative one could wish for; but as a spoon you are not a success. You haven't had practice enough—you are really too much in earnest. Girls don't like to know they own a man; the fun all fades away when you are sure you have him hooked. Hooked! that's just it; it's like fishing. Who ever cares to fish for catfish? As soon as you throw your hook over they snap at it so voraciously, that all you have to do is to pull them into the boat. It makes very little difference whether the hook is baited or not. But when you come to fish for black bass or brook trout—gamey fish,—you have to be so careful about selecting the right bait, and so careful about throwing the line, and so careful that he does n't get away while you are landing him, or that the line will break, or a thousand other little things, that it really becomes interesting. It's the fish you are not certain you can catch, and are not sure you have caught, after you have him hooked, which interests you in fishing. Now you go and get half-way in love with some other girl, and I may become so interested in winning you back that I shall fall in love with you myself."

He evidently could not make up his mind whether or

not to carry out his original intention of being angry. She saw this, and determined to settle it as "not," and so said :

"Now don't go off and mope for two or three weeks. Go over and make love to Wawona. She is not inclined to trifle with people's affections, and you can get up a real nice 'platonic friendship' with her. She is enough older than you are to prevent your wanting to be 'spoons,' and besides she is a graduate of Wellesley, and has read enough and is educated enough to interest a Harvard junior in something stable,—in 'food for thought,' as Professor Allen says. I have been out in California so long that all I can do is to talk slang, and do the 'society act,' and carry on flirtations, et cetera, et cetera."

Then she added with a roguish air, as she took his hand in a placating, pleading way, and drew herself over to him in a sort of girlish cuddle which made his face brighten and show that he had temporarily forgotten the pique her words caused him :

"Now promise me that you will not break our engagement for Thursday, and I will try and put up with you, and will promise to give you two dances."

Suddenly a change came over the expression of his face ; he started to speak, hesitated, thought an instant, then withdrew his hand, and said :

"And will give five or six dances to that unknown latest, Mr. Morrison."

She started. He saw that he had touched a sensitive point, for a slight flush came over her bright face ; her laughing eyes sobered and became downcast. She absent-mindedly began dangling her collection of chate-lains from her raised hand. Then carefully sorting out one, held it swinging back and forth in front of her, as she sat with her eyes fixed on the floor, lost in thought. Jender watched her face intently. The girl had been

a curious study to him. Occasionally she said things which indicated either a very broad reading or a very astute mind, and then the next instant she would be rattling away on some society nonsense, with a half apology for having given him the idea that she had any truly stable thoughts. The possibility of reserve force made her light frivolity very enticing to the youth, and he had become very much interested in his cousin, as he called her.

"He is really the most peculiar man I ever knew," she said, boldly returning to Morrison, so that Frank would not be suspicious of the *faux pas* of the night before. "Do you know, it rather bothers me to have him flirt with me?"

By this time she had taken to dangling three or four of the chatelains, and sat back and watched them with affected carelessness, trying bravely to keep up an appearance of utter indifference.

"I imagine it must, since I have been informed that you cut dances with three or four of your best friends to give him the opportunity to be alone with you in the conservatory at the Walling's party, last Wednesday night, and took the trouble to play several of your latest airs on your guitar with him alone in the conservatory," Jender answered, looking at her in a quizzing way, as if trying to catch the effect of his words.

She saw that she dare not continue in this strain any further, or else Frank might recall it when Wawona's engagement was announced ; so she determined to again gradually turn the conversation into other channels, and answered, apparently as fully indifferent as before :

"Oh, that's nothing ; I'm used to little things like that. What bothers me is to have him flirt with me, and pretend to be 'gone on' Wawona at the same time. There, I'm awfully slangy, ain't I? Well, it is the proper thing

to be slangy in California," she rattled on. "You see, they have an idea out there that Boston young ladies are all of the kind who say 'pinks, prisms, and prunes,' to leave their mouths in pretty shape, and read Dormstardt's 'Logarithms of the Diapason,' and other musty tomes, and quote Emerson and Carlyle; and are altogether dreary, old, prudish blue-stockings. And so, to show them that we are not all of that kind, I started in to catch on to their slang; and really think I have made progress, don't you?"

"Yes. So much so, that I think you are entitled to the rank of professor. But to return to Mr. Morrison," he added, for this Mr. Morrison and his connection with his "cousins" had been an interesting problem with Jender for over a fortnight; "you do not mean to tell me that good, sensible Wawona Brooke, with all her ability and brilliancy, has any thought of that fellow? Why, from what I can learn, she meets twenty men a week who are a thousand per cent more capable, more brilliant, more original. I think you are wrong, and that because he has paid Wawona a little attention, and she has returned it graciously, as she always does, you are afraid that your 'black bass' is going to get unhooked, and so you think she is caught as well as yourself." Then he continued, with a smile: "Don't show him too plainly that you are in love, Fanny. Remember, that it's 'the fish you are not certain you can catch' which interests one in fishing."

"Well said," she answered vivaciously, "I like that. You turned my own guns on me in fine style. I will be more careful the next time I philosophize with you. But really, Frank, you are wrong. I have never seen Wawona so interested in any man since her little affair with a Harvard student, when she was at Wellesley."

"That shows you are jealous, for if Wawona ever had

an affair with any one, surely I would know of it," Frank answered, to urge her on.

"No, this was before you went to Harvard. The Wellesley seniors went out to Class Day at Cambridge, and Wawona was very much struck with his oration. Nothing would do but she must meet him. I have forgotten what his name was now. But he was from out in Minnesota somewhere. He wrote the most divine letters you ever read. I think he sent her his picture, and she kept it up in her room for a long time."

"But what became of him? She is not the kind of a girl to flirt with a man, and then give him up for the fun of seeing him drop."

"I don't know," she answered absent-mindedly, as she had determined to make an excuse to retire now that she felt certain that Frank would not misunderstand her action; "she went down to Hampton Beach for her vacation, and after that she never spoke of him at all. In fact, she seems to grow sad whenever she refers to him, so I never do nowadays. By the way, Frank, come to think of it, I may go down to Dover this afternoon to visit Agostine Stonehill—I am expecting a letter from her every minute—in case it comes I shall have to excuse myself for Thursday. Good morning."

Frank sat and mused for a considerable time over Fanny's suggestions concerning Morrison and Wawona Brooke, whom the boy almost worshiped. He knew that two more dissimilar characters than Fanny Northrop and Wawona Brooke could hardly exist, and so it seemed strange to him that they could both be interested in the same man.

Miss Brooke had been a very earnest student while she was at Wellesley, and since her graduation had given most of her time to her Browning Club, and the carrying out of numerous little resolves, made while at college, to

delve deeper into certain lines of literature. She oftentimes, however, went into what Fanny called "society"; generally with the idea of studying the social phases of American life, more than of joining in with the "merry throng." Occasionally, however, she met with some congenial spirit who would arouse the social part of her nature, and almost unconsciously she would find herself accepting nearly as many invitations out as her cousin Fanny.

As he sat there, Wawona entered. He determined to settle the Morrison question at once, so as soon as they had exchanged their morning greetings he asked:

"Who is this Mr. Morrison, of whom I hear so much nowadays, Wawona?"

"An English gentleman, a very intimate friend of Mr. Vansandt," she answered evasively, as she had hastily determined not to make any more confidants until she knew that Morrison had had an interview with her guardian, and its result.

"Surely, you know more than this, for I know you are interested in him—if interested is strong enough," he said earnestly. "Now, my dear friend Wawona, whom I have been hero-worshipping as the beau ideal of all that is cultured and refined, is not going to do anything so commonplace and giddy as to fall a victim to an empty-headed society swell and flirt?"

"Why, Frank, how can you talk so? You have never met Mr. Morrison, and know nothing about him. He is not empty-headed; he is a cultured and well-informed gentleman. Where did you gain your information about him?" asked Miss Brooke earnestly, yet at the same time good-naturedly.

"There, there, Miss Wawona," the boy hastened to answer, as he feared from her manner that he had offended her. "Please forgive me; I know I ought not to

have spoken like that. But from what they tell me of him, he is not the kind of a man I have pictured in my mind's eye as the one in whom you were to be interested."

"Now, Frank, to be honest with you, and to repose a confidence in consideration of a discretion far beyond your years, and in reward for the graceful compliment you have just paid me, I will say that I really do not know why I am interested in Mr. Morrison—for I admit I am. The mere fact that the lighter and gayer young ladies have not found him cultured does not prevent him from being so. It is the bee, not the butterfly, that finds the honey in the flowers. And the man of the world has a habit of not unloading his better and sterner ideas on the extreme society young lady, for fear she will think him pedantic."

She saw that Frank was taken by surprise at her zeal in her friend's cause. And to prevent misunderstanding, she continued, after a moment's hesitation :

"Alone with me, I find Mr. Morrison a versatile, well-balanced, clear-thinking young man. He has read at the Inns of Court, and so soon as he has settled some landed affairs of his family out West, intends to return and practice law, or rather act as counselor in England. Of course, like all society men, he has his light and bright side—call it giddy if you will. This he exhibits to those who appreciate it. For that matter, Frank, we all of us partake more or less of our surroundings. A person of one disposition will bring out one phase of our character ; one of a different sort, another. It seems as though our souls were made up of different tones, and that the tones of others, having complementary or uncomplementary tones, will fill in with ours, and make chords,—either harmonious or jangling,—sometimes the light and merry chord of the minstrel's banjo, and from that through all gradations to the grand, sonorous, and solemn chord of

the church organ; and as our tones have made discords or harmonious chords, so are our feelings toward others made. Now, I admit to you when I am with Mr. Morrison I feel as if I had found harmonious tones, which unite with mine and make harmony a logical result. We each bring out what is best in the other."

She finished her speech and sat gazing into space, day-dreaming. He stood and watched her, until, to break the silence, he finally blurted out:

"So at last you are really in love, Wawona?"

This speech somewhat startled her by its abruptness. At first she was inclined to tell Frank of her half-completed engagement, but immediately dismissed the thought as ill-advised, and concluded to wait until she had heard Morrison's report of his interview with her guardian, and replied:

"Perhaps this discussion is rather premature, Frank. Still, as it has been begun, and as you are such a flattering, clever cousin, and as you know how to keep your knowledge to yourself as few men do—traditions about women's gossiping capabilities to the contrary notwithstanding—I will say this much further: I am not in love with him, according to the ideas of the "Duchess" or "Rhoda Broughton," or any of the other modern society novelists. I really think I outgrew that phase of interest shortly after I left Wellesley, when, if I were not averse to the idea of the existence of such a thing, I should say I had a case of 'love at first sight.' At that time I met a young man, a senior at Harvard, in whom I think I was sufficiently interested to be really in love. But it only lasted a few weeks—at least," she added with a sigh, "with him."

Frank did not notice the sigh, however, in his eagerness to ask:

"A Harvard man? What was his name, Wawona? Perhaps I know him."

She thought an instant, and then said:

"No, I really feel that I should not tell you his name. The remembrance, probably, would give him pain, and he would not want you to know about it. While I can use my own discretion in talking about my own affairs, as long as they are wholly my own, I do not feel the same liberty where the affairs of others are intermingled with mine. We really were very much wrapped up in each other. We spent the whole of two days together—such delightful, all-absorbing days. Do you know," she said, as if in a reverie, "I think I had more natural, physical bliss in those two days, while I thought I was wholly and completely in love, than I have had in all the rest of my life combined."

"Well, what was the matter? Why did n't you keep it up? He did n't jilt you, did he, Wawona?" he said jokingly, but at the same time very anxious to find out this secret, which had been a mystery to him ever since Fanny had referred to it.

"No, and yet yes," she answered hesitatingly, as if deliberating whether to continue the discussion. "When I left Cambridge I told him I was going to the White Mountains, and he said he was to remain in Boston for a time, and then go to his people in Minnesota. I received two letters from him—one from Cambridge and the other from Hampton Beach; and then I had an opportunity to run down to Hampton Beach for a few days before we went to the mountains. I thought I would surprise him. So I ran down to see Callie Baldwin, who was at the hotel there.

"I arrived just in time for dinner.

"Something in the tone of a waiter, who was serving a lady near me, attracted my attention. Turning sud-

denly, I was face to face with him over whom my young heart had been throbbing for the last week. Yes, there he was, in a waiter's apron. He turned deadly pale, and then scarlet, but showed no sign of recognition, and hastened shame-facedly out of the room.

"My first impulse was to laugh, my next to cry. Callie laughed outright, but I said not a word. You cannot understand the feeling which came over me—the feeling of sorrow for him. I knew he was a gentleman, and a man of the most delicate feelings, and so I could understand how keenly he felt the disgrace,—no, it was not disgrace,—the bitterness of the situation. I learned afterward that it was all on account of his pride. It came out that his father had allowed him just a certain amount per term for personal allowance, and one of his chums had been arrested for some college prank, and Paul—there"—flushing—"I did not intend to use his name—Paul paid his bail, and then, not to be compelled to write to his father and explain, went down to Hampton Beach, to earn enough to pay his fare home."

She remained silent for a few moments until Frank aroused her with—

"Well?"

"I wrote two or three times afterward, but never saw him again; and never thought I did, until I met Mr. Morrison. Do you know, that really I fancied it was he, when I first saw Mr. Morrison across the room."

"Why do you not speak to Mr. Morrison about it and see if he is a relative?" Frank asked, interested in spite of himself.

"I have been on the point of doing so a thousand times, but it seems almost impossible to approach the subject, as I would be compelled to disclose so much of my feelings. Besides, you know several people knew of my little affair, so it would be easy for him to hear of the

story and connect my questions with the past. And the only way to be safe of a secret is to keep it to yourself."

As she finished she again dropped off into a reverie, following out this train of thought in her own mind, until she finally gave a slight start, and turning to Frank, added :

"How many times a little hint of an intimate friend gives others an opportunity to gain possession of our dearest secrets, by combining that hint with other little occurrences and ideas previously gained. How very often is that hint the keystone to their arch of testimony, which completes the evidence, and without which they have nothing."

"Well, there you go soliloquizing. I suppose that is your delicate way of telling me that our interview on your private affairs is at an end," said Frank.

Then he added in a half playful, half pleading tone :

"But really, Wawona, I am intuitively in love with your Harvard Paul, and I intuitively dislike your Oxford Paul. There ! Did it ever strike you what a strange coincidence, that you should think they looked so much alike, and that they should both have the same first name?"

"It is strange, is it not?" she answered in a weary, absent-minded tone, which let the boy know that she was ready to drop the subject.

CHAPTER IV.

THERE probably never existed a young man more disgusted with himself than was Paul Morrison, as he sauntered home upon leaving the Northrop mansion after the scene with Fanny and her father.

He evidently had a problem on his mind, for he was in a brown study.

"Well, I think I had better go back to *my* nurse," he said to himself, as he called to mind the scathing sarcasm of the banker.

"Here I am undoing my best plans, just as they promised success—merely because of a pretty girl and a neat-fitting dress," he soliloquized half aloud.

Suddenly he came to a dead halt and said to himself, almost vehemently :

"Undoing *my* best plans ! Am I ?"

No one was there to answer, and probably this was just as well, for the expression on his face did not bode any good to an antagonist at that instant.

"Am I not doing something worse ?" he added, as he resumed his walk. "Am I not ruining the peace of mind of the woman I really love, because of my uncle's vaulting ambition ?"

Then, he said with a petulant air :

"Oh, I must not think of this !"

But petulant airs and petulant ideas do not control a mind which has just had such a passionate interview with such an interesting girl, for he finds himself constantly trying to return to the subject, and his will power as constantly checking the tendency. His reason has not yet become disentangled from his passion, and his

pride has hardly recovered from the shock and chagrin of his interview with the banker. All these conflicting forces tended to prevent his will power from accomplishing its object ; and so, when he arrived at his lodgings he was still carrying on a dialogue with himself, trying to assist his reason to master his passion and chagrin.

He unlocked the door quite absent-mindedly, went up to his rooms, and dropped into a large lounging-chair.

After having sat there, his legs stretched out in front of him, and his hands thrust deep in his trousers pockets, completely lost in thought for a quarter of an hour, he aroused himself, went over to a handsome writing-desk, which stood in the corner of his elegantly furnished bachelor apartments, and from a secret drawer in it took out a photograph of a hard-faced, stern-featured man, the lines of whose face would have proclaimed to a physiognomist that its owner had a will which would overcome any obstacle, and a determination which would make even the fairy-tale actions of " Monte Christo " a living possibility.

It was the picture of John Craig, his mother's brother.

Morrison had never seen his uncle in person, and up to the time of his graduation from Oxford College knew little of him, except the fact that he was wealthy.

Just prior to Morrison's sixteenth birthday, his mother had received a letter from this brother, advising her of his whereabouts, and telling her that he had amassed a considerable fortune in the fur trade among the Cherokee Indians in far-off America, and that it was his desire some day to have Paul with him. At the same time he agreed to furnish her an annuity. This was especially welcome, because of the fact that the living which her husband had left her was not a particularly handsome one.

There was but one condition to the annuity,—that she

should give her son Paul the best education England could afford, and should attempt to make him, as he expressed it, "such a gentleman, that any lady of breeding would be willing and proud to have for a husband."

"Moreover," he added, "teach him to hold in check his impulses; make them, make everything, subordinate to his will power. Develop the control of will over all his actions. Make it so predominant that he would be able to undergo any suffering to accomplish that which it dictated as necessary. Make its control so strong that it could force him to burn off his own right hand, if that act were necessary for the accomplishment of his ends. And above all, do not let him marry until you have first written me.

"Advise me of the very first attachment which tends in that direction, for two reasons: first, because marriage in general is a display of control of impulse over will; and second, because it is my desire to inquire into the disposition of her who is to assist in forming the character of the only relative in whom I have any interest."

After that, the other letters his mother received had all been modeled from the same formula — merely advising her of the sending of her draft.

Finally, however, about eight months before his graduation, the monotony was broken by the following:

"DEAR SISTER:

"Inclosed please find draft for the quarter ending July 1st.

"Let me know three months in advance when Paul is to graduate, as I have plans for his future.

Your brother,

"JOHN CRAIG."

In compliance with this request, his mother had written her brother. She had Paul write at the same time, thanking him for his kindness, and assuring appreciation thereof, and his willingness to repay that kindness by anything in his power.

He was not very much surprised, therefore, to receive this answer :

“PAUL MORRISON, Esq.,
Oaks, England,

“*My Dear Nephew :*

Your letter thanking me for the drafts to your mother was duly received.

“The only portion of interest to me was this: ‘I shall always be ready, dear uncle, to show my appreciation of your kindness in any way possible, so I can prove to you my thanks are not mere words. And I assure you that the portion of the letter which you wrote my mother, when you advised her concerning the development of my will power, which she has oftentimes quoted to me, has been constantly in my mind; and I feel I can assure you that I have profited by the advice, and can warrant you I have a well-trained will.’

“I now write to say that I have use for that ‘well-trained will.’

“In order that you may understand me, I must explain something of my past. I will attempt to be brief.

“Your mother will tell you that I have but one God, — ‘Success’; that the accomplishment of an end would make me consider no exertions in that behalf as labor.

“I have now before me the possibility of accomplishing one of the greatest triumphs a man could hope for in this modern day.

“It was my good fortune to marry the daughter of a Cherokee chief. By that marriage, I was admitted

among the chiefs of the Nation, and since that time the other chiefs have died. The only descendant from them now lives in Boston, and has a legal title to an undivided portion of five million acres of fertile land. The title is in the chiefs, to be held by them in trust for the Indians.

"There is but one flaw to my title, and that is in the young lady of whom I have just spoken. Her name is Wawona Brooke.

"She has the only right antagonistic to mine, and that right, at the day of her marriage, *ipso facto*, passes to her husband.

"I have kept myself advised of her surroundings for the past ten years. She is a graduate of Wellesley College, is inclined to be literary in her tastes, is refined and cultured. I have attempted to have you educated so that you would have some inclinations in common with her own.

"Of her past relations, generally, I can tell you all.

"The only man in whom she has been at all interested is your cousin, Paul Cameron, who is at present an instructor at Harvard College.

"For some reason which I have been unable to find out, they have neither seen nor heard from each other for more than a year.

"She is at present the ward of her uncle, Amos Northrop, a banker in Boston, Massachusetts, in the United States.

"My plans are these : I desire that you shall go to Boston, and enter society there. Join the Somerset Club and any of the other swell clubs, if necessary. Spare no expense. Live but for one object — success.

"Marry Wawona Brooke.

"Draw on me for any amount necessary, but unless absolutely necessary, do not write to me direct, nor see

me, until you can say: 'I have been successful; I am the husband of Wawona Brooke'

"In closing, I have two remarks to make by way of caution. Do not come in contact with your cousin Paul Cameron, or let it be known that you are his cousin; and do not let it be known to any one, especially Miss Brooke, that you are related to me.

"Let it be understood that your money comes from your father's estate, and obtain your money through your mother; advising me, through her, if you need an increased allowance.

"And remember, I now live but for one object, and that, to have you the husband of Wawona Brooke.

"Woe be to him who stands between me and that object!

"I await your successful report.

"Your uncle,

"JOHN CRAIG."

Morrison stood and looked steadfastly at the picture he held in his hand. It seemed as if he was trying to read what sort of a vengeance its original would work out, should his dearest scheme be thwarted.

The contents of this letter came back and impressed him with all the force they had when first received.

With a shrug of the shoulders, as if the ideas were unpleasant, he put away all thoughts of his harsh uncle, and for a substitute permitted his mind to wander back to his own career from the time he left Oxford.

When he arrived in Boston, and found Miss Brooke to be a highly cultivated and cultured girl, with a pleasant person and charming address, he assured himself that his uncle had set him a comparatively easy task,—especially as he found himself making rapid headway with his suit from the very outset.

He himself could hardly understand his success. The way seemed prepared for him, and she seemed to be attracted to him at once.

They readily fell into a familiar acquaintanceship. This too without any of the little preparatory sorties with which love affairs are supposed to be prefaced. Indeed, he seemed to become the accepted one as if by force of circumstances and by natural right.

Although he appreciated the absence of spontaneity in himself and his own actions, yet he felt that he might have with her a union of much interest from a mental standpoint, for their reading had been in the same lines, and they had many interests in common.

Moreover he was so confident his will power had supreme control over his impulses, that he felt assured he would be able to enjoy with her a moderately happy married life, if not considerable more; because, in a negative way, he must have happiness, as that self-same will would crush in its incipency any tendency toward an attachment which would cause regret.

But as his thoughts approached the latest developments in the situation, he realized that he appreciated to a great degree, more than he really cared to admit even to himself, the originality, piquancy, and charming naivete of the bright and clever girl who had unwittingly diverted him from his fixed course. He felt that in his implicit confidence in that will power, and the certainty of its preventing him from having any true feelings, he had recklessly permitted his passions to open the portals of his heart wide enough for her personality to make a great impression there.

He shrugged his shoulders, as though trying to turn off the thought, and said aloud:

"I really believe I have the blues, and that, too, over a girl."

But the thought was not to be removed by a shrug. He saw that he was at a turning-point in his life,—that he must decide at once whether he should follow out his uncle's plans and consummate the engagement with Miss Brooke, and by so doing crush out of his own life every possibility for true, spontaneous feeling, or whether he should retire from the course upon which he had just commenced, and break his engagement, if it may be so called.

He felt assured that if he should by such an act remove the pressure of his will power from the flood-gates of his true feelings, a faint stream of which he realizes has for the first time escaped from its controlling pressure, those feelings would burst forth with an impetus which would make his love for Fanny Northrop the complete, absorbing destiny of his life. For he has at last begun to understand, that besides his appreciation of her exceeding comeliness, the piquancy and originality of her conversation, the keenness and brilliancy of her repartee, there is a similarity in their mental methods, in the animus of their actions, and in their tastes and aims,—a similar self-confidence, a reckless absence of veneration for established methods of action,—which will always make them agreeable companions, and he now feels lovers, whose affection will outlast the passionate fusillade of a honeymoon.

He has about determined to let the flood-gates open, when another woman comes into his thoughts—the Goddess of Liberty on the American Eagle.

He sees that, to withdraw from his engagement, he must increase the disgust and dislike of Amos Northrop, and must at the same time bring down upon himself heaven only knows what vials of wrath of his uncle, and, a most unfortunate corollary result, the forfeiture of all present income.

He is too much a man of the world to think of taking upon himself an establishment such as a marriage with Fanny Northrop would necessitate without an income ; so her ladyship the Goddess of Liberty brings the influence of passion to a sudden stop, and the flood-gates are closed firmer than ever.

His troubled reverie caused him to pace up and down the floor.

Finally he halted, and asked himself half aloud :

"Give up an assured position to obtain—what?"

Again he shrugged his shoulders.

"A story-book sort of bliss which we conceive to follow a marriage for love, because of descriptions of it in love tales, written nine times out of ten by people who have never known what real love is."

Then the scale seemed to turn in the other direction, for he thinks :

"But surely I have had experience enough to know when I am in love. If I did not feel positive that the tendencies of our minds are so similiar, and that we should undoubtedly have the same feelings toward each other five years from now, I could throw the matter off as easily as I throw away that cuff," he said, as he jerked off that innocent and inoffensive appendage.

"But the truth of the matter is, we are both cranks, and cranks in the same line, and I never expected to see another crank of my kind. And so, if she goes out of my life, I feel as though she who was ordained by God for me has been taken from me by an unkind fate. Or," he said as he halted again, "is it because of my cowardice?"

This stopped the soliloquy again, and he recommenced the pacing.

"No," he said firmly, "this possibility of enjoying an unknown quantity of bliss is not sufficient recompense

for bringing down on my head Uncle John's wrath, and the interminable explanations necessary to withdraw from my engagement.

"Love in a cottage is all very well, but it has too many drawbacks for a practical man."

He dropped into a chair, deeply despondent, now that he realized that all hope for anything but the life laid down by his cultivated will had passed forever. He bade good-by to his true, spontaneous self with a deep sigh, and returned to the struggle with the thought of an interview with Uncle Northrop, as the banker had become to him, now that his position as father had been forced to fade into insignificance.

Ringling for his valet, he donned his dressing-coat and dropped into a lounging-chair for a restful smoke before going to bed.

Having made up his mind to keep his impulses under control, he enjoyed the negative bliss of absence of care and worry attendant upon the future.

He felt assured that if he put on a bold front and asked for Miss Brooke's hand at once, he would be successful. His goal was set, and to reach that goal it was only necessary to carefully pursue the path marked out for him by fate.

CHAPTER V.

WHILE dressing on the next morning, Morrison found his thoughts constantly returning to the scene in the "den" off the Northrop parlor, and his will constantly checking the tendency; for he realized full well how near the brink he stood.

After breakfast, Johnson, his valet, brought him his papers and mail — the usual assortment, two or three advertisements from tailors, a note inviting him to a little party, and a few personal letters, among which was that from Fanny Northrop.

He disliked to admit to himself that his pulse beat higher as he recognized her handwriting.

He read the letter, examined the photograph carefully, and then turned it over to see if she had written anything on the back — all in vain.

After that he read the letter again, and gave a lack-luster, far-away smile, as he came to the paraphrased quotation from Will Carleton.

The letter was evidently a study to him.

He read portions of it over and over again.

Finally he said :

"What does she mean by 'This might become a confirmed habit'? Does she know of my proposal, or does she intend to corner me again with a 'No pop, no kiss' proposition? Or is she trying to give me the impression that she has jilted me?"

This gave him a twinge of conscience. He tried to shake off the thought.

"I must stop thinking of her, or I shall have the blues again. Well, there is just this much about it : I cannot

fall in love with her, because I shall not have a penny if I do. Let her think what she will of me, it must be done. But how am I to meet her father? That is the present problem."

He found himself wishing that she was right, when she said that her father would not again refer to the interview of the night before.

He disliked to face the banker, but was fearful that unless he did so at once he would be unable to act out the lie about dancing, and also that a delay might be misconstrued by Miss Brooke.

He decided to carry out his resolution of the night before. He hurriedly ran over a letter from his mother, and one from a friend in England, and then dressed himself carefully in preparation for his call on Amos Northrop at the bank. He had made up his mind to call there, because he was afraid that if he went to the house he might be upset by another interview with Fanny.

After dressing, he found his temerity trying to convince his will that his intention about seeking an interview was rather hasty, and finally compromised by determining to wait until after banking hours before attempting it.

As he went up the bank steps he caught himself inwardly hoping that Mr. Northrop had been called out of town, or had gone home, or in fact had done anything which would take him out of the possibility of being reached.

No such luck, however—the banker was in his office.

Mr. Northrop noticed him as he came in the door, rose and shook his offered hand in a perfunctory way, and then said:

"Excuse me one moment, until I finish dictating this letter."

"Do not let me disturb you, Mr. Northrop," said Morrison.

"Please be seated," answered the banker, "I shall be at leisure in a minute."

Morrison took the proffered seat, and then let his eyes wander around the office.

Everything betokened a man of method; each article was evidently in its place, and seemed to have an air about it which distinctly said that it was to be returned to its place after use.

As the correspondent left the room the banker turned to Morrison, with the nearest approach to a smile he had ever noticed on that stolid face.

"Now I am at your service," he said.

"I called for two purposes, Mr. Northrop," Morrison began, finding himself somewhat nervous, in spite of his determination to keep cool. "First, to explain my truly absurd position of last night, and then to ask a favor of the greatest moment to myself and your ward, Miss Brooke."

He noticed a slight involuntary closing of the jaws of the smoothly shaven banker, as he said this, and in order not to be interrupted, hastened to add:

"Last Saturday morning I obtained the permission of Miss Brooke to ask your consent to our marriage, and I called at your house last night to do so. I found no one there but your daughter, and while we were amusing ourselves with a dance," he bravely continued, notwithstanding a scowl began to darken the banker's face, "wrong as it was—we were interrupted by your appearance. That was what I meant last night, when I said you misunderstood the situation. I want to be frank with you, Mr. Northrop. Under the circumstances I, of course realize that my actions were very improper, and I hope this will pass for an apology."

He stopped, waiting for an answer.

Mr. Northrop was evidently digesting what he had said, and trying to make up his mind what to answer.

The silence increased Morrison's nervousness. He must do something, so he added :

"I suppose I ought to say something about myself. I am the only child of my father, Roderick Morrison, who was the fourth son of Sir Robert Morrison, of Glen Ellen, Scotland. I have an income of some fifteen hundred pounds a year. I have been educated at Oxford, and intend to become a counselor at law. My American friends are those whom I have met in the last eight months, and you know as much of me as they do ; hence I will say nothing about references to them, but I can give you any English references you desire."

The banker continued to look him straight in the eye, without moving a muscle. He had altered his expression but once thus far during the interview, and that was when the almost involuntary scowl came across his face at the mention of the scene of the night before.

He continued for some time to finger his pencil. He turned it over and over again on the arm of his chair, and appeared to be formulating his answer.

Finally he said in a measured way, which showed that his words had been the subject of much thought :

"Mr. Morrison, I have been more or less interested in you for the last six months, because you were a friend of my charges. I am familiar with your financial standing, and that is satisfactory."

He then stopped, and for a second lowered his gaze, evidently having changed his mind about the next sentence. But after a moment's hesitation he again looked up, and said :

"You say you have been frank with me ; I intend to be *really* frank with you. You, yourself, are not satisfac-

tory. I do not believe that any young man who has had opportunities for an open, honorable, worthy career, with possibilities of doing much good for his country and himself, can have the correct principles in life, such as would make a properly reared American girl a true husband, if he has been contented to lead the life of a society flirt."

Again he paused, and again continued: "Moreover, I cannot understand your actions with my daughter. I tell you frankly, I have not said one word to her, nor do I intend to do so; but I am certain you have not been ingenuous with her, nor with me concerning her."

Morrison would have interrupted him with protestations of the truth of his explanations, which the banker, by innuendo, seemed to doubt, but a certain expression in the eye of Mr. Northrop deterred him.

"For these reasons I was impelled by first impulses to refuse you my consent, but I have determined not to do so. I am going to give my consent under certain conditions, and I shall now explain these conditions to you.

"As you know, my niece is the daughter of a full-blooded Cherokee Indian. Her father was a man of great strength of character, and one whose constancy to purpose could not be shaken. The daughter has manifested many of his physical traits. Her life hitherto has been such that she has never had any tendency to bring into play her inherited Indian instincts.

"I have never been compelled to thwart her in any desire, and I do not care to do so now. The fact that she has permitted you to ask for her hand is sufficient evidence that she thinks she loves you. If I were certain that she did, and that you loved her as you should, I would give my consent unconditionally. It is my impression that her feelings are but a temporary fancy. Still, I fear that her inherited traits would cause her to

disregard my refusal, and this we should all regret hereafter ; so I am going to give my conditional consent.

“By the terms of her mother’s will, my guardianship ceases when she has reached her twenty-fourth year, which will be three years from this time. If you are willing to absent yourself from her for that time, so that your love for each other may be tested by a three years’ separation, and if at the end of that time you are still betrothed, I will, on the very day my guardianship ceases, give you my consent, and the handsomest wedding Boston can afford, and will settle on Wawona an annuity of twenty-five hundred dollars a year.”

The expression on Morrison’s face during this long statement was a study : in it were intermingled chagrin, disappointment, and anger. He first reddened, and then alternately whitened and reddened, then swallowed three or four times as if preparing to interrupt ; but finally, when the proposition was fully made, he hesitated.

Without changing a muscle of his face, the banker asked :

“Are you prepared to give your answer now?”

“I would prefer to consult with Miss Brooke before doing so.”

“Very well. Will you be able to give me an answer by Monday next?” asked the banker, not at all softening in his tone.

“I think that will be time enough,” Morrison answered.

“To be sure that we understand each other, I will say this : I do not act until I have fully made up my mind as to the course to pursue. If you accept this agreement, and perform your part, I shall carry out mine to the letter. You, of course, must know from what I have said that I do not want my niece to marry you.”

“You have certainly been frank with me, Mr. Northrop, and I can assure you that, if I accept your terms,

I shall live up to the agreement, strictly. Good afternoon."

Morrison made up his mind that the best thing for him to do was to have an interview with Miss Brooke at once, so he hailed a coupe and was driven out to the residence.

During that drive he was trying to devise what he should say and do in case he met Fanny Northrop. He found the problem an insoluble one for the moment.

He might have saved himself the trouble had he known that she, being equally fearful of a meeting with him, had gone to Dover, to spend a few days with a friend whom she had been promising to visit for some time.

Morrison's interview with Miss Brooke was brief and matter of fact for a scene between lovers. They finally agreed to accept the terms, and arranged to correspond once a week during the long separation. He evinced more warmth toward her than he ever had in the past, and kissed her, and indulged in other little passionate pleasantries common to affianced couples.

She felt at the time that there was an absence of the fervor of the kiss which she had received on the train at Springfield.

He knew that his own feelings were different from those he had had in the "den" on the Sunday night before.

Morrison, after his return to his rooms, studied for a long time, to determine how to answer Fanny Northrop's letter. He felt that she would always misunderstand him, and was anxious to evolve some method of explaining his position, without compromising himself with respect to Miss Brooke. He found it a difficult task.

Finally, having given up all hope of seeing her, he determined to write, and state the facts in as plain lan-

guage as he could, leaving fate to work out the situation for him.

After deep consideration, he wrote the following letter :

“MY DEAR MISS NORTHROP :

“The note inclosing your photograph was as clever as the original is beautiful. I shall keep both, in remembrance of some of the happiest hours of my life. That our paths from this time on diverge does not rob me of the satisfaction of having known one of the cleverest and brightest artists at repartee.

“The necessity of your flag of truce has been removed, for I am engaged to your cousin Miss Brooke, of which until now I have not been free to speak ; and owing to the relentless mandate of your father, who accepts me only on probation as the fiancée of your all too charming cousin, Miss B., I am to absent myself from Wawona and Boston for three years. So, as I sail for Europe at an early date, your trip to Dover forces me to convey by pen, instead of by word of mouth, my regret at what has been and what can never be again. We oftentimes, at impulsive moments, permit ourselves to do things which we cannot afterward explain even to ourselves ; still, I hope you are a friend on whom I can rely. Forget all.

“Your true friend now and always,

“PAUL MORRISON

“BOSTON, May 27, 18—.”

“Regret at what has been and can never be again — Forget all !”—exclaimed Fanny, as she read and re-read the closing lines.

“So he does think I am dying of a broken heart. Well, I must fool him.”

Forthwith she reached for her writing paper, but the

jaunty tone of her resolution faded as her feelings brought her to soliloquizing :

"I suppose I must admit that I never met any one else in the world who seemed to look at life through the same spectacles that I do ; who has the same interests, the same whims, and the same tendencies as I, but, nevertheless, that is all over ; I am to be the 'true friend,' now and always."

Then she took up the letter, and read it again.

"So he can 'rely' upon me, can he ? That sounds as though he was afraid he could not, and was too much of a coward to ask me to keep my own counsel. If he had only remembered that 'self-preservation is the first law of nature,' he might have saved himself the trouble."

This thought did not cheer her spirits, however, and she soon found a tear trickling down her cheek. She dashed it off with a petulant air, as if disgusted with herself, and said as she turned to the writing-desk :

"Well, I suppose every dog has his day, and at last I have found mine. This is my Waterloo at flirtations. The only thing I can do is to keep the matter to myself, and try another letter to see if I cannot prevent him from being assured of the truth of his impressions."

After a little more study of his letter, she determined to follow his formula for opening and closing, and wrote the following :

"MY DEAR MR. MORRISON :

"I was about to commence my letter with that old chestnut, 'Your very welcome letter has just been received, etc.' when I bethought myself that would not be exactly the truth, because of the one sentence, 'Forget all !'

"This was unwelcome, because it does not sound at all natural—it seemed too melodramatic for you. Besides, I

always like to do what my friends request of me, and I do not want to forget anything of the charming six months I have passed, while you were attempting to keep from telling me a fact which I was trying to force you to confess all the time.

“Really, Mr. Morrison, you gave me one of the most interesting problems in psychological philosophy I have had in society for a long while ; for I assure you I never before tried so many social experiments in such a short space of time. And I am certain I never developed a livelier interest in any problem. The only part of the problem which remains unsolved is, Why did you not succumb to my experiments at once ? Was it because you did not think me capable of seeing the fact as it existed, or was it because you did not have confidence enough in my friendship to be sure that the confession would not change it ?

“But enough of this. I trust you will remand that objectionable ‘Forget all !’ sufficiently to allow me to retain in memory all our experiences save those last mentioned.

“I was about to say that I congratulate Wawona on her good fortune in capturing the most interesting gentleman friend I ever knew, when I happened to notice the way in which you relegate her to the neuter gender ; for you say, ‘I am engaged to your cousin Miss Brooke, of *which*, until now, I have not been free to speak’—under those circumstances, I do not know but that I will advise her to be certain that your love is purely disinterested and reliable.

“So much for nonsense. And, joking aside, I hope your lives, when commenced three years from now, may be as fruitful in pleasure as your brilliant prospects at present give promise, and that you both may have all the

happiness expected by your friends, and also that I shall always be a close friend to both.

"It looks now as though my visit here would prevent my seeing you before your departure for Europe; but whether I do or not, remember that, as the boys say in California, 'I never went back on a friend,' and also that I can be relied upon.

"Your true friend, now and always,

"FANNY NORTHROP."

"DOVER, June 2, 18—."

After she had finished the letter and was ready to direct it, the thought struck her that she did not know his present address. She wavered a moment, considering whether or not to destroy the letter, and then made up her mind to send it to his club.

Had she followed the impulse to destroy the letter, her after-life would have been different from that which fate had decreed.

CHAPTER VI.

FANNY NORTHROP remained at Dover until she felt she could return and face her friends—Frank Jender and the rest of the world—without flinching whenever there was a reference made to Morrison.

She had had enough opportunity for reflection to reason out the exact status of her feelings toward this enigma, as he was to her, and had come to the conclusion that, with his loss, had passed away all possibilities for *une grande passion* in her life. She might hereafter have affection for a man, but any possibility of being completely and wholly given up to one man's love had passed, when that peculiar friendship had its end.

Frank Jender, she knew, was the only one in the Northrop household who suspected the true nature of her feelings, and she inwardly dreaded an explanation with him.

She had hoped that this interview might be averted until she had been home a week or two, and had recovered her old spirits. But fate was not with her; for the next day after her return, some three weeks after Morrison's departure for England, she walked into the library and found Frank sitting there. She made a brave effort not to lose her composure, and said in her usual, off-hand way :

"Hello, Frank, all alone?"

"Yes. Wawona had to go upstairs to write a letter to his royal highness over the sea. I was left here to amuse myself, and you appear on the scene like an angel of mercy, to save me from the fate of getting interested in myself."

He took hold of her hand, and turning her around, so as to look her full in the face said :

"What's the matter? You do not look well."

She released her hand, and then fluttered around the room, moving a vase here and arranging a seat there. At the same time, she tried to collect her thoughts, and hit upon some subject to divert the conversation.

"I don't know; possibly I took too much exercise when I was up country."

"I may be mistaken; I have not seen you for so long a time. Let me see — I have not had a chance to chat with you since that day you informed me I was a cat-fish. What a world of things have happened since then!

"And your black bass has wriggled off the hook, has he, Fanny?" he said, apparently joking, but in reality by way of experiment, for he made up his mind that some-

thing had gone wrong, and that he was the man to right it.

He had intended to make an impression, but hardly one so striking as he did ; for happening to look up at the large mirror over the mantel-piece, he caught an expression of pain and sorrow on the reflected image of Fanny's face as she stood behind him, unguarded, as she thought herself unobserved. There was a revelation of so much feeling in it that he would have given anything to have had his words unspoken.

Fanny deliberately came around in front of his chair drew up another close to him, took his hand, and with a voice so earnest as to almost frighten him, said :

"Frank, we are friends, and we both love Wawona, so I want to have a talk with you on that subject now, and then let it drop forever ; because, if you keep teasing me, sooner or later Wawona will know of it, and it may be a cloud over her happiness."

Then she arranged herself for a long confidential talk.

"You are the only one who knows the extent of his flirtation with me," she said, boldly plunging into the subject. "If I was flirting with him, you know he got the better of it, and, of course, must know that I do not care to discuss my defeat. If I am in love with him, it is a hopeless love, and therefore must be so deep as to be one of my sacred memories—so sacred, that to discuss it, to make it even in the least degree the property, of any one save the subject of that love, would be a desecration. In either case, therefore, it would be best and kindest to let the discussion of the 'black bass' and his influence drop forever, both because it would occasion me sorrow now, and because there would be a possibility of its occasioning Wawona sorrow hereafter. Now, promise me you will be a dear, kind cousin and do as I ask."

He did not answer at once, but sat and looked steadfastly at her, still holding her hand.

He understood that she had suffered, and tried to think of some way which would reassure her sufficiently to make her feel that he did not understand her as well as he knew she thought he did. However, fearful that she might misconstrue his silence, he answered :

"I promise never to refer to him again. But, Fanny, I never saw you in this mood before—I never knew that you had anything but the bright, lively, happy, don't-care-whether-school-keeps-or-not mood. How much you must have suffered. Can I help you in any way?"

"I am glad it is you who have found me in this mood. It will not last long, though. I have been brought face to face with the realities of life for the first time.

"Up to the termination of this flirtation, I have been nothing but just 'a happy girl.' The fact that everything which required judgment was arranged and removed from my care by all of you who love me left me to plunge recklessly into my happiness with absolute abandon. I had had so many flirtations and had been so accustomed to have men come into my life, and be everything while they were near me, and nothing when they were away from me; to have my interest in them circumscribed by the boundary of 'extreme joy of propinquity and despair of distance'; and to go into things in a 'sporty' sort of way; and to expect to be one of the many to him, exactly as each man was always one of the many to me,—that I did not conceive it possible to have any one's identity sufficiently impressed on me to become necessary for happiness. But now that this affair has shown me what a reckless life I have been leading, and has brought me face to face with the stern, real world, you must never expect to see the same old reckless abandon again. I have, so to speak, been intro-

duced to my own judgment ; and, while I am going to keep up a show of life and recklessness so that no one will suspect what I have confessed to you is the truth, you can expect soon to see that judgment have control over my actions ; and soon dear old father will begin to find that Fanny's California trip has not hurt her so much as he feared.

"There, Frank, now that is honest and ingenuous, is it not? And you can consider yourself flattered indeed, for I was never so really confidential to any one else in all my life."

He did not answer ; but sat still holding her hand, while he continued alternately to gaze at her face, and then at the hand.

His silence worried her. She had talked herself into an unnatural calmness, which contrasted with her previous nervousness ; so, in order to break the silence, she said, without really caring to have him answer :

"What are you thinking about, Frank?"

"Your statement that this unhappy calamity with Morrison had introduced you to your judgment," he answered. "What little things make great changes in our lives! What trifling happenings start us into entirely different lines of existence!"

Then the thought came to him that it would probably be better to direct the conversation toward himself, for her unpleasant frame of mind was apparent to him ; so he added :

"I was trying to make up my mind whether I had ever been introduced to my judgment."

She appreciated his motives, and took advantage of it.

"Oh, it's lots of fun getting acquainted with yourself, Frank, but you must be really stirred up in order to get the introduction. Now, if everything is running along smoothly, and I am not having any trouble, why I act

upon exactly the same principles, and from exactly the same motives, all the time; theater parties, dancing, lawn-tennis, flirtations, and all that take up my whole time, and I do not get a chance to think."

"Well," he answered, "certainly that is enough to take up anybody's time. You don't mean that you have been compelled to do anything else with it?"

"So you think you know me, do you, Frank?" she answered, evidently in a thoughtful mood.

"Yes, of course, I do. Haven't I been almost a brother to you ever since your return from California?"

"Yes, but this is the first time you have found me in one of my earnest moods. My Aunt Florence out in California had a great influence over me, and could do almost anything with me. She was the first one who ever let me know that I could take interest in anything but light society events; and I think that I developed more mental capacity from my conversations with her than I would have gained had I gone through the same college education Wawona has."

"Well, you are getting serious, truly. I suppose we can expect to hear a sermon from you next."

"If you really want a sermon, I can give it to you; because I think I have probably done a great deal more work upon religious topics than you have. The truth of the matter is, Frank, I really believe that one day I was introduced to my own soul, just as this affair has introduced me to my own judgment. Every once in a while I have a quiet little religious visit with myself. Probably, now that I have met my judgment, I shall have nice little philosophical discussions with it; and the first thing you know, I shall be instructor of philosophy in some college."

"Well, you are a strange girl!" he answered, glad to see

her joking tendency return. "I don't think you could have the blues fifteen minutes, if you tried."

Then, fearing that a silence might cause her to return to her unhappy mood, and in order to keep the conversation directed in other channels, he said :

"But about your soul — who introduced you to that, Fanny? This Morrison trouble introduced you to your judgment : was it another man? I am jealous again."

"N-o-o" she answered, drawling out the monosyllable as if trying to make up her mind whether to continue her confidences.

"It was Nature herself, I think."

The expression on her face showed that she had made up her mind to go on with her confidential talk.

"You find me in a very strange mood to-day, Frank, —into the channels of thought in which I often drifted while with Aunt Florence, when I would be really serious and was not acting on the idea that everybody thought I ought to be harum-scarum."

"And in one of these moods you were introduced to your soul, were you?"

"Yes. You see it was in this way. I was spending a week with Mrs. Leslie at Berkeley, a little college town in Alameda County, just across the bay from San Francisco, the site of the University of California, and one of the dearest little places in the world, cuddled up in a bend in the hills which form the first approach to the Coast Range mountains.

"Immediately back of the town is a series of cañons, and I loved to ramble through them in search of maiden-hair ferns.

"Don't be alarmed, Frank, if I go into extravagant raptures, for if there is any place in the world I am really in love with, it is Berkeley. Along Strawberry Creek, as it runs back into the hills, you can see every possible variety

and character of river scenery in miniature : waterfalls, ripples, cascades, valleys, recesses, caves, cañons,—everything in profuse loveliness. Well, in my impetuous way, I started out about four o'clock one afternoon—it was in November—I wandered up the creek, reveling in the scene and having a lovely little visit with myself. I came to a dark cañon, the sides of which were entirely covered with maiden-hair ferns. I went to work collecting, and when I had gathered all I wanted it was almost dusk.

“As soon as I realized how late it was I scrambled out of the cañon and up to the road on the hill which leads down to Berkeley. Then I beheld one of Nature's panoramas which, had it been reproduced by a painter would have been pronounced by the self-satisfied critics strikingly beautiful, but overdrawn.

“Directly opposite me was the Golden Gate, with San Francisco bay lying almost beneath my feet in the shape of an irregular ellipse, with the shorter axis between me and the Golden Gate; on the left bow of the ellipse lay the City of San Francisco, its towers, church steeples, smoke stacks and residences standing out on the summits of the hills prominently in relief, looking like old baronial castles. On the right bow were the Marin hills, their summits topped with great pine trees, which also stood out in bold relief against the lurid sky beyond and thus gave the mountains a weird, uncouth appearance.

“There had been no rain for a week, and the elements were just gathering for a shower. The atmosphere was so dense and still that the smoke from the furnaces in San Francisco had settled over the town in one murky cloud.

“The picture moved me; I stood perfectly still, watching the scene, for it touched a chord which I had never felt before. After a time I seated myself on a rock be-

side the road to watch the sunset. The refraction of light through the heavy air over the ocean gave the lowest stratum of the sky a dense garnet color, which appeared the more dense because of the contrast with the almost purple hue which the woods on the eastern slope of the Marin hills had assumed, on account of the absence of light on them, as, owing to the steepness of the hills, the sun had set there a full half-hour before. Each higher stratum had assumed a fainter tinge of garnet, until, at the zenith, the lighter finer clouds had but a tinge of pink. It seemed as if God himself had appeared, and to those perfect surroundings of coupled marine and landscape views had added every variety of tint, to make the scene more striking.

"I do not know how long I sat there, leisurely watching a steamer traveling from San Francisco to Saucelito immediately between me and the Golden Gate, and leaving behind it a long, irregular, sinuous trail of smoke, before the almost oppressive silence of my surroundings seemed to overpower me — I hardly breathed.

"Gradually thoughts began to creep over me I never dreamed of before; in fact, I did not conceive my soul could have them. In my silly, flippant way, I had always 'guyed' anything inclined to be poetical; but there, amidst those surroundings, my feelings seemed to force themselves into prominence, and soon, even my mercurial self realized that it would be a sacrilege not to revel in that sunset.

"At first there came a feeling of sorrow, partly because there was no one for whom I cared present to enjoy the scene with me, and partly because I appreciated the fact that I was not worthy to enjoy such a scene. Then there came a softer, more impersonal and sweetly sad feeling,

'A feeling akin to pain,

That resembled sorrow only as the mist resembles rain.'

"At length I arose, and strolled slowly down the hill, stopping now and then to watch some new color effect, or to try to distinguish some little town on the opposite hills, from which, here and there, lights had begun to twinkle forth.

"When I arrived at home I found the whole household in commotion over my absence. Poor Mrs. Leslie was quite alarmed at my unusual soberness, and would have had a worry over me if I had allowed her.

"I insisted upon their taking my excuses to some friends with whom we had an engagement that night, and had some toast and tea in place of supper. And then, when I was all alone, I pushed a huge lounging-chair up to the fire, took a big Maltese cat in my arms, and sat there by myself until nearly eleven o'clock, apparently melancholy and in the blues, but in reality communing with my soul.

"I actually believe for the first time I knew Fanny Northrop. I ran over my whole life from beginning to end—how good every one had been to me, how trifling my own aims had been—and everything of joy and sorrow, from my childhood on, came welling up in my thoughts, and whatever was truly worthy in me asserted itself for the first time. And for the first time, also, I appreciated that I had within me a something, I suppose you might call it a monitor, which was quite displeased with me for my careless, aimless way of living. That monitor, I suppose, was my soul; and I was really happy in meeting it.

"But it was an awfully queer and gloomy way to be happy, was n't it? Still, I am confident I never spent such a pleasant evening in all my life."

Her speech was followed by silence. Frank had hardly time to recover from his astonishment at this new vein of character which Fanny exhibited. He knew that the few years she had spent with her aunt in California had

developed much of the girl's mental capacity and that she had done a great deal of reading while there ; but he, in common with the rest, had been so accustomed to consider her a light, gay, jolly companion, that he could hardly realize she was capable of anything else.

Fanny herself was in a reverie.

While they sat thus, Wanona Brooke entered the room.

"Why, what a lugubrious looking couple ! What has happened ? Have you two lost your best friend ?" asked Wawona.

"No," answered Frank merrily ; "Fanny has been giving me a picture of California sunsets, and at the same time, showing me a new side to her character.

"Do you know, now, that we have only known one side of this girl ? She is a poetess."

Then he turned jestingly to Fanny, who was sitting in the same position as when Wawona entered, and asked :

"Why don't you write a book, Fanny. You are original enough to startle the world, and if you can do that your book will be talked about, and if it's talked about will sell and make a lot of money."

"Well, I may be conceited, old man, but I'm not that bad," she answered ; shrugging her shoulders as if to shake off her more serious mood and resume her old self, together with its reckless dialect.

"Every girl who thinks she can write English, and has permitted her girlish sentimentality to deceive her unsophisticated mind into believing that she has a capability of conceiving passion, imagines she can write a novel. Exactly as every highy-tighty, fly-away thing, who can say little declamations in the way her elocution teacher instructed her, thinks she can be a great actress. But I can tell you one thing, and that is, if I do write a novel it will be *sui generis*. I will not bore my readers with

two or three chapters of introductory trash, describing the lovely valleys and beautiful scenery of the surrounding country, or the peculiarities of a lot of ill-sorted and highly uninteresting and absolutely unimportant servants, or the oddness of the system of governments of the adjoining counties, or any other of the tedious twaddle they generally throw into books."

"And everybody skips," suggested Frank.

"Yes, and everybody skips," Fanny accepted, continuing; "I will get right at the dialogue. It will be quotation marks from beginning to end.

"If one wants to read a treatise on philosophy, or a history, or a description of places, they know where to go to find them; and if one wants to read a novel, he wants to hear people talk and to get at the plot and a few love scenes. If there is anything that wearies me, it is a society novelist who has deluded himself with the idea that he has a mission to perform."

"How, then, do you explain the fact that you were so much interested in 'Robert Elsmere'? Surely it has enough theological dissertation in it, and yet you read it three times, to my certain knowledge," Wawona remarked, for the first time taking an active part in the dialogue.

"You could not have been so interested in the love story as not to be satisfied with one reading. And goodness knows, you are not religious, for we have all had enough trouble to persuade you to go to church, and you have driven poor Mrs. Matthews almost insane over your criticism of what few sermons you have heard."

Fanny hesitated a second before she answered.

She realized that the exhibition she had already made to Frank of the peculiarities of her lines of thought had placed her in a position to be the subject of conversation among her friends; and so she faltered a moment, trying to decide whether to exhibit a little more of her

solid self to Wawona, by entering into a discussion of religious subjects, or to throw it all off by taking refuge behind her every-day butterfly jollity.

Finally, however, her more stable self gained the ascendancy. She turned to Wawona, and said very seriously :

"Now I am going to astonish you, too, in the same way I have Frank.

"You all believe because I talk slang, and try to be always free from care and independent, that I never delve into deeper subjects. Of course, I cannot blame you, for I have kept these possibilities to myself. But strange to relate, and contradictory as it may seem to Mrs. Matthews, I am very much interested in religion and theosophy and Buddhism and several other 'isms' in a broad-minded way.

"You see, Aunt Florence was one of those iconoclastic thinkers—I think that is what they like to be called—that or agnostics, which is still newer and more *au fait*,—who really do not believe in anything and who are always trying to keep everybody else from belief. And every Friday night she would gather together a number of her friends, and they would discuss 'advanced ideas,' as they called them. I used to consider them a great bore at first, and only attended for fear I would hurt Aunt Florence's feelings if I staid away. But, finally, I became really interested in them."

"And you mean to tell me you became religious?" Wawona asked, interested in the girl's earnestness, in spite of herself.

"No, I do not mean to say I think I ever can be good-and-go-to-church-namby-pamby kind of 'religious,' like Mrs. Matthews," Fanny answered, throwing off all reserve, as she felt she would have to explain herself in full, or be wholly misunderstood. "And what's more, I

don't want to be ; nor do I want to accept everything as true because the minister says that the Bible says it is true."

"Do not say that, Fanny ; that is sacrilegious," Wawona said, quite seriously affected by the force with which Fanny expressed herself. "You must have faith in something, or you will be wholly miserable."

"That is exactly the thought which has brought me to this way of thinking," her cousin answered ; "for belief is not a voluntary act of the mind. I do not want to be an unbeliever. I do want to have faith in something, and Robert Elsmere's sermon, before those working people is the first essay sermon, or religious dissertation I ever heard, or read, which did not make me think I was being gulled from the very start, and therefore so antagonistic that I would not even accept whatever of the dissertations were really good sense ; and I admit that the 'good sense' portion was generally in the great minority."

As she said this, Mrs. Matthews entered the room.

Fanny knew that the old lady was going to be horrified at what she was saying, and ordinarily would have desisted for while she was always teasing the old housekeeper and quasi governess, who was one of the most devout church members of the good old Presbyterian school, on ordinary subjects, she had always heretofore held aloof from tilts with her on religious topics.

But now she felt that in justice to herself she must continue the discussion.

"Really, I have never heard a single sermon in my life which did not contain something about which I could not say truthfully : 'That is not so, and the minister saying it knows it is not so, as well as I do, and he is only using it to lead us to his way of belief.' Now, as soon as that happens, I become disgusted and obstinate, and

my thoughts are further away from true religious feelings than when I went into the church.

"As Mrs. Ward says so truthfully, in *Robert Elsmere*: 'I turn away from the Jesus of Nazareth because he has been disfigured and misrepresented by the churches.' So when Elsmere began to dissertate on a religion based on 'experience,'—'the record and instrument of man's education at God's hands,' and talked of a 'God, the Father Almighty' as a 'force at the root of things,'—'an Eternal goodness,'—'an eternal mind, of which nature and man are the continuous and only revelation,' without mingling it with a lot of miracle bosh and revealed nonsense, I had the peculiar sensation of becoming interested in a religious book, and I have read '*Robert Elsmere*' three times for the theological essay, and not for the love story."

Mrs. Matthews, who had been listening in speechless horror up to this time, now interrupted:

"Fanny Northrop, I am ashamed of you. It is exactly as I warned your father. I told him that Mr. Warton, our minister, said the young and worldly minded people were becoming so interested in *Robert Elsmere's* teachings, that the book ought not to be permitted to be in the house. And now he will find out the wrong which has been done by not paying attention to my admonitions. Oh, if you could only be brought to the church and learn 'the way to the light!'"

Fanny hesitated again a few moments.

She generally had a deal of policy intermingled with her apparent heedlessness, and under other circumstances she would not have felt that she had received sufficient recompense from having worsted the old governess to cause her to follow out the discussion. But now, thinking that both Frank and Wawona would think

her rather sacrilegious unless she made herself better understood, she turned to Mrs. Matthews and said :

"Yes, that's the way with you church people, who let the minister do all the thinking for you. You imagine you have satisfied your intellect when you have not even exerted it, and go on using your minister's sayings for intellect.

"You talk about your 'way to the light,' she added, warming to her subject; why, 'Robert Elsmere' has done a great deal more to bring me and a thousand other 'worldly minded' people, as you call us, to the 'light,' than the combined efforts of your so-called 'divines' could have done in a year's preaching. They waste about half their sermons in complaining that we worldly minded people do not go to church."

Then the expression on her face changed.

"Now, answer me one question. You may not see the reason for it, but please answer it. Do you know the way to Honolulu, in the Sandwich Islands?"

"No," answered Mrs. Matthews. "Why should I? I never was there."

"That's just it. Now, suppose I should give you a large sugar plantation over there, worth half a million of dollars; how long would it take you to find the way there?"

"Why, I would go right down to Mr. Smith, at the ticket office, and ascertain."

"That's just it, again. Now, I, and the rest of the worldly minded people, are in exactly the same condition as to the '*way* to the light.' We do not want the *light*, and so all the efforts of yourself and your tiresome preachers cannot interest us in the '*way* to the light.' But get us interested in the '*light*,' and we will very soon find some ticket agent in the shape of a divine who will teach us the way there."

She hesitated a moment, then continued :

"The highest praise I ever heard of 'Robert Elsmere' came just now, when you said your minister was complaining that worldly minded people were interested in it. For if 'Robert Elsmere' can bring worldly minded people to think earnestly on theological subjects, it is getting them on the first step toward desiring 'light,' and is doing more than your clergymen themselves can do, as they confess when they complain from the pulpit that they cannot get them to church.

"To my mind, the only way to keep us from being worldly minded is to get us interested enough in spiritual affairs to think on them seriously; and to do this, you must begin as Mrs. Ward did—by stripping theology of all this miserable miracle bosh."

"I will not listen to another word! I will go to your father at once!" Mrs. Matthews answered, as soon as she had recovered from her surprise. "Fanny Northrop, the devil has possession of you!"

Fanny turned to Wawona and Frank, who stood looking at her dumbfounded.

"Whew, what a rage! That is a fair sample of half the female theologians. I suppose she really would like to see me a Christian, but wants me to reach belief in her way. And if I do not, I absolutely believe she would prefer I should remain without any belief. Am I shocking you, too, Wawona?" she asked, as the silence which followed the precipitate departure of Mrs. Matthews made her realize that, in her earnestness she had completely monopolized the conversation. "I am afraid that in the heat of my discussion I have been rather abrupt."

"You certainly have said very harsh things about some very sacred subjects," Wawona answered, trying to be truthful without hurting her cousin's feelings, "and you are hardly conventionally religious; but," she has-

tened to add, "so long as your religion has underlying it the practical principle, 'Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you,' it does not seem to me to make much difference what your theories are. I, myself, belong to the Presbyterian Church mainly because it was my mother's church."

"Do you believe in inspiration — in revealed ideas?" Fanny asked, earnestly.

"I really have not given the subject the thought I should; but I have always conceived that I did, merely because it was expected of me," Wawona answered seriously, for Fanny's earnestness had apparently become contagious.

"Fanny, I begin to think that the very fact of my belonging to the church, and having all my ideas prepared for me, as it were, has been the means of causing me to do less thinking on such subjects than you have done."

Frank, who had been an earnest and silent listener up to this time, now came forward.

"I believe in inspiration," he said, "but in a peculiar way. That is, I believe that any one who has a natural aptitude for a study, and who devotes his whole time and effort to the development of that study, will see and know things connected therewith so original that the knowledge will seem to the average person capable of being acquired by no ordinary process of the mind; and therefore, perforce, to have been inspired. For instance, my instructor, Mr. Cameron, with whom I am studying physiological chemistry, almost every day performs some very peculiar and original experiment, and oftentimes obtains such astonishingly unexpected results, that if I did not know the immense amount of time and labor which his wonderfully capable and highly cultivated mind has devoted to the subject to enable him to accomplish these

results, I would be prone to consider them miracles and to consider my instructor inspired.

"So, of course, any student of moral and theological philosophy will have ideas on theology far in advance of those of us who only think of religion when we are forced to do so. And if the student have a natural aptitude for such studies, he too must have ideas so far beyond our capabilities that they must seem to us to be revealed. Hence it is no wonder to me that the followers of Jesus, with their grand and noble thoughts on faith and belief and their comparatively highly refined natures, should have seemed to the ignorant Roman populace to have been inspired, and that their writings should have been handed down to us and accepted as revealed thoughts and teachings."

"You do not mean to say that you think there is any one now living who is inspired, do you?" asked Fanny, quite as much taken aback by Frank's interest in the subject, as he had been by hers a few minutes before.

It was lucky for Wawona that each of her friends was such an interesting study to the other, or else possibly one of them might have noticed the peculiar expression which came over her face at the mention of Mr. Cameron.

"Not in the usual acceptance of the term," Frank answered, as oblivious as was Fanny that Miss Brooke had had one of her dearest memories brought back to her mind.

"But do you know, I almost thought Mr. Cameron was inspired one Sunday morning.

"It happened this way. He always takes a walk on the hills on Sundays. This particular morning I caught up with him and asked if I might accompany him. I confess I am awfully fond of him, in a sort of reverential way; for although he is not much older than I, he is so

devoted to his work and knows so much on all scientific subjects, that, as I say, I almost revere him.

"Well, he picked up a small piece of stone which had been washed down from the hills ; and, turning to me, said thoughtfully : ' Jender, if that tiny pebble could talk, it would preach a sermon in comparison to which today's combined efforts of all the learned divines in the world would sink into insignificance. It would teach a lesson of that divine controlling force of the nature of which we are unable to conceive, but which the theologian has placed in the shape of an anthropomorphological God, that would make the strongest sceptic listen.' And then he talked on most interestingly, showing how geology, chemistry, biology—in fact, every science—assisted in making us believe and have faith in the true God.

"Well, during that talk, or preferably discourse, he obtained conclusions which seemed to me must be inspired—must be of divine origin ; but which were in reality only the product of his more than ordinarily capable mind.

"It is really a treat to know such a man. I have often thought you would like him, Wawona, if you only knew him. He has so many tastes in common with you."

The reaction in Fanny's feelings had already set in ; she had become silent and almost gloomy. Wawona had been in a half reverie ever since the first mention of her friend's name, but she had been trying to keep up an apparent interest in the discussion, because she was not certain that her involuntary start at the mention of Cameron's name had not been noticed, and therefore, she felt that any tendencies to reverie might be construed into some connection with that start.

Now that Frank turned to her with a direct allusion to him, she felt herself redden. She knew she appeared

conscious, and, thinking her only safety lay in apparent carelessness, asked :

“ Was he formerly a student ? ”

“ Yes,” Frank answered, pleased that she took an interest in his friend. “ He was a Harvard man. Maybe you knew him ? ”

She was about to say, “ I did know him ”—when she realized that she was treading on dangerous ground, as she had already alluded to him in such a pointed way to both her hearers.

She therefore determined to turn it off, and answered :

“ I do not think I did, but I would be pleased to meet him, as he is such a dear friend of yours. Besides, he would probably like to discuss religion with Fanny.”

Frank noticed she was not at ease, and wondered what was the occasion of it.

Miss Brooke felt that she must summon up enough courage to start a new subject of conversation, when Fanny, who had been silent for a long time, relieved her of the necessity by saying :

“ Frank, will you take me for a ride ? I am almost exhausted. This being in earnest is too much for my brain.”

“ Certainly ; if Wawona will excuse me.”

“ Of course, I will, but I expect to have a further conversation with you soon.”

When they were well on their ride, Fanny said :

“ Now, old man, we understand each other, don't we ? You are not going to be a cat-fish nor a black bass, and we are all always going to be platonic friends ? ”

“ Yes, I guess so. People say that is impossible. And I think myself, in general, platonic friendship is merely a name we like to give to our intercourse when we are in love and do not care to admit it. But I think I am cured, and as you will always be thinking of somebody else, I feel certain that we are safe to be friends.”

CHAPTER VII.

FRANK JENDER, during the year which followed Morrison's departure from Boston, had been so wrapped up in his college course, the completion of his studies, and the arranging of his post-graduate work to prepare himself for his course in medicine, that he had little time to observe the changes which were taking place in his uncle's household.

He had been a commencement speaker at graduation, and was somewhat piqued when Miss Brooke, who had always appeared to manifest so great an interest in him, had neglected to accept his invitation to the exercises, especially as she gave him no better excuse than that she had an engagement to make a party-call that afternoon.

He, of course, never dreamed that she found herself involuntarily flinching from facing a scene similar to the one which, a few years before, had made such an impression on her girlish brain. However, she had complimented him very highly on his oration, which she took occasion to inform him she had cut out of the "Globe" for her scrap-book, and in several other delicate ways evinced so much interest in him that the pique was soon forgotten.

Besides, she had been interested in his plans for the future. He intended to take a two years' post-graduate course in organic and physiological chemistry, under Mr. Cameron, in conjunction with his work at the Medical Department; and was much flattered and pleased that she was so interested in his scheme, and that she agreed with him so perfectly in the idea that a thorough

course in those studies might develop interests which would probably open a new field of specialties to him as a physician. He little suspected that the fact of Paul Cameron being his instructor was a great factor in Miss Brooke's interest. And, truth to tell, she herself could not have told, had he asked her, the extent of this additional interest; but had she canvassed her mind she would undoubtedly have found that the memory of her happy associations with him played a not inconsiderable part in her new-found interest in abstract science.

In his post-graduate study, Frank's social relations with Mr. Cameron assumed a more familiar character. The enthusiasm of the youth in his work soon dispelled whatever distance the dignity of the instructor had hitherto placed between them, and soon they became more like fellow-students than instructor and pupil. So Frank had begun to make Mr. Cameron his confidant and he in return had, during the twelve hours a week in which they were thrown together—almost alone, as there was no one else in Frank's course—learned whatever there was to be learned of Mr. Cameron, although that information was meager in the extreme.

There was a college tradition about what a "terror" and howling swell he had been while a student, and a dim rumor that because his father had lost a fortune while he was at Heidelberg, he had been compelled to accept an instructorship to enable him to finish his education in the specialty he had chosen for his life's work.

Frank had often wondered why a man of Mr. Cameron's charming address and attractive personal appearance had not gone into society, but never had found an opportunity to ask him the reason.

One day he determined to experiment.

"Why don't you get married, Mr. Cameron?" he asked in an apparently careless way.

"Well, to tell you the truth, Jender, I have had no opportunity," he answered evasively.

Frank was not to be put off that easily, however.

"But you are not a man who has to wait for an opportunity. With your superb physique and presence and ready address, you could make an opportunity easily enough."

He looked at Frank attentively for a time. The thought flitted across his mind that the boy might be trying to find out the present status of his feelings toward Miss Brooke.

Frank, in his confidences, had spoken openly of his uncle and "cousins," as he called Miss Northrop and Miss Brooke; in fact, so frankly and so openly, that Cameron felt he did not suspect the relations which had existed between himself and Miss Brooke for the few days which were still the oasis that his memory constantly furnished him in his present social desert.

Frank had never referred to Morrison's connection with the family, because that connection was very distasteful to himself, and also because he was certain it was equally distasteful to his uncle.

The instructor had been several times on the point of questioning Frank as to whether Miss Brooke had formed any attachment; but had refrained from doing so, in the first place, because his refined nature rebelled from prying into others' affairs, and also because he feared to excite Frank's suspicion of his connection with her in the past. So he had contented himself with what few stray references the young man had made to her in his rambling talks of his own affairs.

Frank, who was waiting all this time for an answer, began to grow impatient.

"Well, have you figured it out? One would think I had given you an abstruse problem in mechanics, from the amount of gravity you have assumed."

Cameron had become assured by this time that the boy knew nothing of his past, and so answered :

"Oh, excuse me! You brought me back to my college days and I dropped off to thinking over the good old times I used to have before time, fate, and ambition combined to remove all possibilities for anything but work. Yes," he said, in what Frank thought a very sorrowful tone, "I was something of a society man in those days ; but that was before my father lost his money and I my prospects."

"But are you not fond of women's society, of dancing and amusements? It seems to me that you would be a great social success, if you would only go out."

"I was very fond of society in my day, Frank. Now, all I have for pleasures in that line are the evergreens in my memory." Frank thought he displayed more interest than he had ever before known him to do in anything but a scientific discussion.

"Do you know what I think, Mr. Cameron? I think you have been in love, and that you are trying to be true to a memory."

Cameron gave a hasty glance, to see if he had unwittingly disclosed his secret ; then, fearing his silence might be misinterpreted, hastened to say :

"No, it is that my science is so jealous, she will not let me have even a memory."

He knew that he appeared conscious and ill at ease, and was at a loss how to act, to prevent Frank from noticing his nervousness. Out of sheer desperation, he picked up a wash bottle from Frank's desk and going into the next room, conspicuously filled it with distilled

water, so that the boy would not understand that he was doing it merely to gain time to collect his thoughts.

He might have saved himself the trouble, had he known that Frank's mind was so busy trying to evolve some way to probe further the vein of information he had hit upon, that he had not noticed the instructor's evasion of his question.

Frank was confident that he had accidentally stumbled upon a secret. At first he determined to unearth this further, and then immediately decided that this would not only be ill-bred, but would probably be the means of raising a barrier between himself and this friend, who was beginning to be very dear to him.

He concluded to try to make him think the conversation had made no impression on him.

So when Cameron returned with the bottle, and carefully began to wash a precipitate he had been filtering, in order that his mouth might be so busy that he would have an excuse to discontinue all conversation, Frank said:

"I wish that you would come down with me and call at my uncle's house some day. You would find my cousin, Miss Brooke, especially congenial, and they would all appreciate you. This must be an awfully empty life for you to be leading, even though you are making such a position for yourself in the scientific world."

Frank thought he was disabusing any suspicions in the mind of his friend that he was trying to "pump" him concerning his past life. The effect, however, was precisely the reverse.

Cameron saw he must turn the conversation, and answered:

"Thank you ever so much, Jender, but I am so wrapped up in my work I cannot spare myself the time."

Then seeing that Frank was preparing to push the invitation further, forced himself to add :

"Instead of my life being empty, I consider it just the opposite.

"In my scheme of life, the only happy man is the contented one. And he only is contented who is accomplishing the aims for which he is living. Social life has such an indefinite aim that it is incapable of accomplishment, and hence knows not what contentment is.

"For that matter," he added, more at ease now that he saw his way clear to lead the conversation where he wished, "I do not pretend to be living at present. I am, as it were, merely in a transition state, storing away forces in a latent form, which are going to be useful and apparent when I do begin to live.

"I have often thought our lives were built by ages and divided into eras, much as the geologists teach us the world's life has been built up and divided.

"There are periods of slow growth and periods of rapid growth. During the periods of slow growth are left the traces of animal and vegetable life, which enable the geologists to determine the characteristics of the fauna and flora of that period. And while the forces which produce the onward change are apparently inactive, they are, in reality, depositing strata after strata on the outlines of the seashore, and storing up within the earth by their superincumbent pressure latent forces, which, at the proper time, react and become apparent, and cause the rapid change which produces the new and advanced era. Now I am developing traits and absorbing ideas which are some day going to be matters of my personal history, and at the same time, I am storing up the latent forces which are to enable me to open up a new era in my own life, and with those latent forces as apparent ones,

to revel in the life of a *savant* on account of my conscientiousness to duty as a student."

"Yes," Frank interrupted, fate seeming to drift him into matrimonial lines, "but you may continue in this age of slow growth so long as to cut out all possibilities of domestic happiness. I should like to see you the head of a home. You would, in my mind, make an ideal husband."

Cameron saw that his attempt at distraction was not successful. The boy seemed possessed, and must be answered.

"You speak of my marrying. How absurd that would be in my present surroundings," he said earnestly.

"My wife must, of necessity, have culture, and must therefore have been accustomed to the pleasures and conveniences of a home of refinement—of wealth.

"Now I, with my salary of twenty-five hundred dollars a year, have barely enough to live as I desire, and supply myself with the necessary apparatus and appliances for pursuing my chosen work. What fool-hardiness, then, to ask some highly bred girl to sacrifice the pleasant accessories of wealth which have become almost a necessity to her, to join me in a search for honor, which is entirely dependent on my mental capacity for success."

"But if a woman of that kind should ever know you well enough to appreciate your true worth," Frank interrupted, not appearing to notice the air of uneasiness which the instructor had assumed, "those sacrifices you speak of would fade into insignificance when compared with the pleasure of companionship, and the joy and elation of being a party to your successes."

At first the thought came to Cameron, "Wawona has sent him as a forerunner to try me." But a glance at Frank showed him that his wish was father to the thought, and he said aloud, somewhat in sadness, due no

doubt partly to disappointment because his suspicion was not well grounded :

"No, Frank, that is a thing of the past ; that is the *ignis fatuus* of youth. But enough of me. How are you getting along with your analysis ?"

Frank felt this meant an end to the discussion of his private affairs. He would have liked to push the matter further, but Cameron's air showed plainly that he felt he had been led into saying a great deal more than he intended. So he reluctantly answered :

"Fairly well ; I am having some trouble with that last one."

"Can I help you ?" the instructor asked, anxious to be alone, but careful to act so as not to excite suspicion.

"I don't think so, thank you ; but I do hope you will think favorably of my invitation."

"Well, we will see," he answered, and walked into his private office, much relieved at escaping from his dangerous cross-examination.

Frank wondered if it were only his imagination which caused him to detect a tendency to sadness in his friend's tone when he said, "That is a thing of the past." Altogether, the whole interview had been very interesting to him, and he was convinced that there was a "woman at the bottom of it." How much greater would his interest have been, had he known that his Wawona was that woman !

CHAPTER VIII.

PAUL MORRISON had always thought that he would find it no trouble at all for him to throw from his mind any object, person, or occurrence he desired forgotten. He had accepted his uncle's theory that a properly cultivated will could compass anything in the way of mental action. But during his trip across the ocean back to Europe, he discovered that his will power, while it might accomplish wonders in the way of controlling the action of the mind, had considerable trouble in controlling inaction.

Every novel he read contained some little passage which reminded him of something which had happened to himself and Fanny Northrop. Every quaint or original squib, or bit of doggerel verse, which attracted him because of its uniqueness or originality, produced in him a fleeting wish that he might quote it to her and enjoy her criticism of it. And in a thousand other ways memory apparently sought to prove to him that she and her manners had taken a much stronger hold on him and his mind than he had at first thought.

Then, to cap the climax, he met an old lady whose name—Miss Goodfellow—proclaimed her to be an old maid, but whose constant recurrence to topics which gave her an opportunity to philosophize on the fact that "marriage was a failure" made him accept as true the rumor that she had been a great flirt in her youth, had been married for her money, and after obtaining a divorce had taken her maiden name and attempted to revenge herself on the world at large by pessimistically informing her matrimonially inclined young friends of

the trials, troubles, and tribulations of ill-assorted marriages.

"The man I pity most," she said one day to Morrison, when she had him alone in a tête-a-tête corner of the ladies' cabin on the steamer, and had forced the conversation around to her pet hobby—"is the man who reasons himself into marrying one girl, while in reality he is in love with another. Of course I mean really in love."

"I do not agree with you, Miss Goodfellow," answered Morrison; "I think it is not so in all cases. If a man really cares for the girl he is going to marry, and feels that her charms are not of the kind which will pall on his interest, and has will power enough to crush in their incipency any thoughts of the other, he must sooner or later become so enamored of the girl he has married as to deaden all thoughts of the other, and ultimately to cease to need the use of his will."

"That is all very well in theory. But you will find, with Dryden, that

'The more we raise our love,
The more we pall and cool and kill his ardor,'"

answered the old lady. "You will find in life that, as to true affectionate love, your mind will be like the works of an elegant watch, into which, no matter how carefully the case is constructed, dust will invariably penetrate. The only way to prevent the works from being reached is to put it away in its case and let it stop. So with the mind which has once known true affection—the only way to prevent remorseful thoughts is to absolutely stop its workings; for, if you do not, every mental effort, every mental function, will have in it something to bring back memories of the other. And no matter what one's theories may be, she who is the present one will never be able to replace that which we conceive might have been, had we been joined with the other."

"Then you think, with the essays of the 'sweet girl graduates' of the seminaries," he said jokingly, trying to convince himself that he did not agree with her, "that 'anticipation is sweeter far than reality'? Now, I think a man of the world, with worldly instructions of the value of the homely maxim, 'A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush,' is assured that Dryden's 'palling' would be out of the question, since there would never be any necessity for his love to be 'raised.'"

"That is begging the question. If all three birds were of the same kind—linnets, for instance—your maxim would do very well. But if your man of the world was one who happened to be particularly fond of the song of the canary, and only passingly fond of the chirp of the linnet, and in his attempts to hold the linnet which he had in his hand he had permitted the canary, now in the bush, to escape and join the other linnet, I do not think his will power would ever be strong enough to enable him to become sufficiently in love with the chirp of the linnet but that, when he heard another canary sing, memory would cause his love to pall *a la* Dryden, and he would regret not having dropped the linnet and spent his time in recapturing the canary. And this feeling will be increased if his imagination happens to be such that the excellence of this particular canary's song is intensified by an over-appreciative memory."

The thrust was so decidedly at the home of Morrison's thoughts, that he soon found an excuse to withdraw and be alone.

From that time on, the memory of Fanny Northrop in his mind assumed the shape of an escaped canary. Plan as he would for distractions, there would always be a something to bring her back into memory.

As soon as he had reported progress to his mother at

their old home, he tried traveling, drifting hither and thither, from one capital on the continent to another.

It was in vain. He always had one problem uppermost in his mind.

At one time the thought came to him that if he could only conquer the influence which the almighty dollar had over his reasons for action, that if his financial dependence on his uncle could be removed, possibly fate might step in and assist him in undoing what she had forced him to do. But as he saw no immediate prospect for a sufficient income in the study of law, he gave up hoping to try to act without his uncle.

Finally he drifted back to London, and was about to make arrangements to commence his studies at the Inns of Court, when, as luck would have it, he received a letter from an old classmate at Oxford, Arthur Seymore, now a Master at Eton, with whom he had done a great deal of work while at college. Seymore invited him to run up and spend his Christmas holidays with him.

He did so. After he had been at the old school town a few days, he found the memories of his college associations, brought back to him by his old college friend, were the first distractions which were at all likely to be permanent. The society phase of his character was lost sight of in this reveling in his scholastic reminiscences, and he found himself involuntarily drifting into lines of conversation and thoughts which were in no way connected with "her." It gave him hope. So, when he found the position of master of the third form vacant, with a salary of two hundred and fifty pounds a year, he determined, much to Seymore's astonishment, to accept it.

"Merely to keep my mind busy," he explained to himself; "and besides, I think Wawona would like the idea."

He made arrangements to enter upon his work a month after the beginning of the new term.

He realized that he could no longer be of society ; so he returned to Edinburgh, gave up his apartments, packed away his dress clothes, ordered a complete new outfit of somber garments, discharged his valet, and entered into preparations for his duties in dead, sober earnest.

At the time appointed for him to commence his new work, it would have taken a very clever man to discover Paul Morrison, the friend of Eryle Vansandt, of the Somerset Club, in P. C. Morrison, Esq., Master of the third form at Eton.

His labors proved to be the best means he had yet found to distract his mind from his memory, and he was about congratulating himself that the chirp of the linnet had reached the same stage of appreciation in his mind with the song of the canary, and that his uncle's theory about the capabilities of a well-trained will accomplishing any desired end in mental control, even though antagonized by affection and passion, was proven, when he received the answer to his last letter to Fanny Northrop.

The envelope was so covered with post-marks as to suggest small-pox. It had followed him from Edinburgh to London, to Liverpool, to Paris, and so on for nearly nine months, and now it found him in this quiet little English town.

It burst upon him like a clap of thunder from a clear sky. The sight of her handwriting at once brought back to him with renewed intensity all those feelings which had troubled him that night after the scene in the "den."

He sat and gazed at the much-traveled epistle for a long time before opening it.

Finally he opened and read it, re-read it—and then there flitted over his face a peculiar smile which seemed

to say, "That's clever, but do you mean it?" At last he laid it down and dropped off into a reverie. Had any one observed him very closely, he would have concluded at once that there were many bitter thoughts running through his unspoken soliloquy; for, now and then, an unpleasant smile would come across his thoughtful face. Still, the prevailing expression was that of a student over a problem in which he was much interested, and which he feared he could not solve.

Then he said aloud: "If it were not for that sarcastic finish, 'Remember that I never went back on a friend,' I could believe her to mean what she says. But that, and the clever thrust at advising Wawona to doubt the 'reliability' of my love, show so much smothered vindictiveness that I fear it is just a clever ruse to make me think she is master of the situation."

Then sitting bolt upright, he said:

"And is n't she?"

He did not answer himself, but permitted his thoughts to wander off to America for a time, till a deep sigh found him saying meditatively:

"Could she know how much I long for that complete, unconcerned, free-from-care companionship which we enjoyed, I wonder if she could forgive my being my uncle's tool?"

Again the wrinkles on his forehead deepened, while his thoughts forced him into such a nervous state, that he walked restlessly up and down his room.

"Why did I let myself kiss her that night in the 'den'? Why did I trifle with my feelings?" he said vehemently. "I should never have known how much I cared for her if I had not permitted my passions to lead us into a position which made me act with her to protect her from her father's suspicions."

He was now pacing back and forth like a caged lion.

"Why?" he said in a fierce voice, coming to a halt in his mad charge across the room, "Why? Why, for the same reason that Napoleon permitted Grouchy to take thirty-five thousand of his very best men from the center of his line of battle the night before Waterloo. How was he to know that Wellington was massing his forces, any more than I to know her father was coming into that parlor. Why?" he repeated, becoming almost tragic in his earnestness, "why, because he thought he was invincible! So much for conceit." His tone was pregnant with disgust. "Self-reliance is a good thing, no doubt, but too much of it can play the devil!" The pent-up feeling was almost exhausted as he threw himself into a lounging-chair, the picture of abject despair.

He had lain there with his hand over his eyes for ten minutes perhaps, when Arthur Seymore entered.

"For heaven's sake, Paul, what is the matter?" he said, alarmed at Morrison's appearance; for the last few minutes had left their impression on his face.

Morrison arose and resumed his hurried walk without answering.

"See here, old man," Seymore exclaimed, "you have something on your mind, and the best thing for you is to unburden it. Ever since you took that wild idea of accepting a poky tutorship down here, and shipped your valet, and started in to be an economical, plodding pedagogue, I have been trying to have a chance to talk to you. Come, old fellow, relieve yourself. You can trust me, can you not?"

Morrison came to a halt, and turning to him the saddest, most thought-marked face he had seen in many a long day, said:

"No, I cannot; I am such a confirmed ass, I almost feel as though I am almost a criminal. So much so,

indeed, I fear you would cease to be a friend if you knew what my conceit had led me to doing."

He was so nervous and excited that Seymore was troubled.

"It is not money matters, is it, old fellow?"

"No, have you not seen me receiving my allowance every quarter, and have I not my salary—" and then he stopped and said with a sorry attempt at a smile, "and have I not proven myself a practical business man by buying a farm? No," he continued, as if about to give vent to his thoughts. Then he stopped and meditated. Seymore, who was watching him intently, saw his mouth set firmly. A look of determination came over his face, and his friend realized that he was having a struggle with his inner consciousness.

"No, it is not money that worries me," Morrison finally said in a despondent tone, "it is fate. If the Pythagorean theory is true, Seymore, my spirit must have been guilty of an awfully peculiar crime."

He turned and recommenced his pacing, but in a much calmer manner. At last he said:

"Seymore, I have made up my mind to ask your advice. I am going to tell you enough of my story to base such advice upon, and then I want you to keep it as sacred as you can. It is a matter very close to my heart—there is a woman in it."

He drew a chair close to his friend, and continued without looking up.

"You know what a queer theory I had at Oxford about will, and how I was always trying idiotic experiments to be sure that I was not being controlled by my passions?"

"Yes," Seymore answered, glad to welcome this quieter mood, "and were always getting the blues because you felt you were not acting as other men did."

"Well, that was all done on the suggestion of my

uncle, John Craig. He was training me so that I could prevent my feelings interfering with his business plans," he said, determinedly checking an impulse to tell his story without confessing his weakness.

"It seems he found it necessary to have control of the husband of a young lady named Wawona Brooke, of Boston, Massachusetts, out there in America, and he determined to have me that husband. So, as he had always been very kind to my mother and myself from a money standpoint, and as I had no female incumbrances, I ventured to undertake the delicate service for him."

"I do not exactly understand you, Paul," Seymore interrupted. "You cannot mean to say he planned from your boyhood to have you marry a girl you never saw?"

"Yes, I do," Morrison answered unswervingly. "Please do not interrupt me, or judge me too harshly before you hear the whole story. Yes, that is exactly what he did; educated me into being a mere automaton to be directed at his pleasure.

"But I assure you, when I first arrived in Boston, and found Miss Brooke a very charming woman, I did not bear my uncle any ill will. For some reason or other, I cannot explain exactly to myself the reason, she was from the outset interested in me. I have sometimes thought I had taken the place in her mind of some one whom she had known before and as I know she was once in love with my cousin, Paul Cameron, now an instructor in Harvard College, I have often thought it was he, and have felt as though I were, in a manner, a criminal — obtaining affection under false pretenses. Well, she has a cousin —"

"Ah!" interrupted Seymore, venturing to joke, now that his friend had assumed his natural tone, "the plot thickens."

"Who is in disposition and tendency of thought,"

Morrison continued, not noticing the interruption, "so like my true self, or rather what that self would have been had I not this constant introspective guard upon my thoughts, that she interested me greatly from the outset."

"A sort of prototype, as it were," Seymore said, in order to assure his friend he was keeping track of his narrative. 'Well, now the plot *does* thicken; it must have been a very absorbing study.'

"To tell you the truth, it was. In fact, I think I never would have been interested in her at all, if some of her peculiar traits had not impressed themselves upon me as being particularly like my own. In my feeling of security at possessing a cultivated will, I never deemed it possible that my heart could be really touched and continued right along, heedless of the fact that I might be injuring my uncle's plans. This cousin has a society phase to her character too. In fact, that was the side of the shield she ordinarily exhibited, and now I think of it, I believe I am one of the few who know she has any other side; who have been permitted to know she has an original mind, stored with original ideas in reserve."

"Ah, I see," said Seymore, "it was a case of diamond cut diamond."

"No," said Morrison thoughtfully, for like most men who are seldom deeply moved, when he was in earnest, he was dreadfully so, "there was no idea of a battle on either side. Each of us considered ourselves affection proof. She had had flirtation after flirtation, and it was reported had refused six men in one season at Newport. So she plunged into our flirtation with as much confidence as I did.

"The fact that Miss Brooke was her cousin made it necessary for her to act *sub rosa*. And of course, my

desire to win her cousin made me keep my movements under cover also.

"Finally we had a most peculiar scene. I do not know what her aim was, but really think she intended to find out the nature of my relations to Miss Brooke, which, by the way, at that time was that of an accepted lover."

He had apparently been rambling on, but now he hesitated as if deliberating whether to proceed. Finally the thought came, "I might as well be killed for a sheep as a lamb," and so when Seymore ventured to prompt him with, "Well?" he continued:

"That is, I had asked Miss Brooke to be my wife. And she had given me permission to try to gain her uncle's consent."

"He was her guardian?" his friend asked.

"Yes," Morrison answered, absent-mindedly.

The question seemed to suggest something to him, for he arose and walked back and forth across the room, slowly but nervously.

"It has just come to me that 'automaton' is exactly the word to define myself. I was so clearly and simply an instrument in the hands of that well-trained will of mine, that I went on carrying out the details of its plans to accomplish Uncle John's wishes, without realizing that all my better and nobler desires were being frustrated by my own acts. I really believe I never thought of that until this minute. I mechanically followed the course laid out without even asking myself why."

He had become so wrapped up in this thought, that the last sentence was almost a soliloquy.

Seymore watched him in his journey back and forth without saying anything.

At last Morrison realized that his friend was waiting for him, and so resumed his chair, and said:

"Well, as I was saying, I proposed on Saturday morn-

ing and called on Sunday night to ask her uncle's consent. As luck would have it, no one was there to receive me but Fanny, and she was a picture whom Jupiter himself would have fallen in love with, had he had the good fortune to have seen her. Enough of that, however. We had a most peculiar scene in a little room off the back parlor. I think she was experimenting with me; I was with her. We both were counting without reference to fate; and somehow or other I kissed her. In fact, we were kissing each other when I heard a man's voice in the next room."

Again he stopped, a sorrowful feeling having taken the place of the nervousness which interest in his story had kept up.

After a time he continued:

"It was her father. Of course, I was politely shown out of the house. The peculiar climax brought me to my senses. I realized that I was in love with Fanny Northrop, and that, at the same time, I had a very great liking for and appreciation of Miss Brooke. In fact, if Fanny Northrop had not existed, I think I should have thought more of Miss Brooke than of any woman living. She pleased my scholarly and intellectual self; the other captured and controlled my natural and spontaneous self, both in a mental and physical way."

Something in Seymore's expression seemed to make him feel that he was taking too much time with interpolations, and so he returned to his story.

"My pecuniary dependence on my uncle made it base ingratitude to retire from his plans; and at the same time, the fact that his support would be removed, and leave me absolutely penniless if I proposed to Fanny, coupled with the idea that I had already heedlessly entangled myself with Miss Brooke, left me but one recourse: I must ask Mr. Northrop for Miss Brooke, and

leave Fanny Northrop to think that for once she was worsted in a flirtation."

He hesitated, faltered, and his eyes filled with tears, as if he were about to give way ; but he recovered himself, arose, and recommenced his nervous saunter. At last he said, in a tragically sad voice, as he dropped into a chair, and buried his face in his hands :

"You must think me almost a villain to confess this !"

Then, with an effort, he shook off the mood, and continued :

"Next day I put on a bold front and spoke to Mr. Northrop for Wawona. He gave me the most scathing, yet polite, verbal castigation I ever heard of ; then consented to the match because, as he said, he was afraid to thwart Miss Brooke for certain reasons. He modified his consent with the provision that we should try the strength of our affection by a three years' separation ; that is, until the termination of his guardianship. In return for so doing, he agreed to give us a wedding the day of the termination of his trust, and present my bride with an annuity."

"And there was but one thing to do," Seymore said, to assist him.

"He gave me a week to decide, and, as you say, there was but one course to pursue. I had to trust fate to extricate me. Miss Brooke and I arranged to correspond once a week, and here I am."

"What became of Fanny ?"

"Well, that is the point of my story. She wrote after I left that evening—I think she must have been informed of my engagement before doing so. In her note she very cleverly gave me the mitten by innuendo. The next morning she took a hasty trip to Dover to visit a friend. I answered her there, informing her of my engagement as if I had not suspected she knew it already,

and this is the answer I get," he said, as he handed the letter to his friend. "You see, it has followed me nearly over the entire continent."

After carefully reading the letter, Seymore turned to him, still holding the letter in his hand, and said :

"Morrison, do you know, I would like to meet that girl. I think from this letter, and what you have said of her, that you are making the mistake of your life."

"I know I am ; but what am I to do ? You don't think a girl of that spirit is ever going to stand being made second choice, even if I were willing to risk the chance of my uncle's wrath by withdrawing from my engagement with Miss Brooke ?"

"No," his friend answered, absent-mindedly, as he seemed to be developing an idea.

Finally *he* took to walking the floor, as he, too, became nervous in his attempt to solve the problem of his friend's life.

At last he turned to Morrison and said :

"Has she any common sense ? Could she be economical ?"

"Who ?"

"Miss Northrop."

"That is a new question."

Then, after some deliberation, he answered :

"Yes, she could. I remember she told me that an aunt out in California made her go to cooking school, and now that I think of it, made her learn dress-making also. But why ?"

"Well, then, now that you have demonstrated you can be a pedagogue, why not take it for granted that it was intended you should get happiness out of a quiet domestic life in our little English country town, and casting aside all aspirations based on high incomes, give up your next few years to becoming so well established as

to be able to throw off all financial dependence on others?"

"I do not catch your idea," Morrison answered, mystified at his friend's answer. "How is that to extricate me?"

Seymore did not answer for a time. He seemed to feel that he had not developed his plan to his own satisfaction.

At last he said:

"Well, my idea is for you to write to Fanny Northrop, and try to learn whether your suspicion that she is interested in you is well founded. If it is, 'jump the life to come,' and boldly undo the false position in which you have put yourself, make a full explanation to your uncle and then trust to yourself and your own capabilities. Very soon fate will show you an opportunity to accomplish your object."

"I don't think I have the same confidence in fate that you have. The fickle jade has not played such tricks on you as she has on me. Yet, I suppose we are all children of circumstances."

"Man is a creature of circumstances, no doubt; but most of us follow out Micawber's principles, and wait for circumstances to assist us, instead of taking hold of every opportunity which offers, to be absolutely certain that we do not miss the circumstance which is our particular opportunity."

"Well, I will think of it; and I certainly thank you very much for your earnest interest, Seymore," Morrison answered, after a short study.

"It seems to me to be the best plan," Seymore answered, as he rose and prepared to retire. "You will find, I think, that an open, straight-forward explanation will ultimately right things."

Morrison continued in a brown study for a long time after his friend had departed.

Finally he thought :

"One open, straight-forward explanation would be an easy thing; but I have about five to make."

However, he concluded to write Fanny in order to find, if possible, whether there was any hope of a reconciliation in case he should determine to attempt such a thing.

The receipt of her letter gave him sufficient excuse for making the attempt.

The result of much thought and revision was the following letter :

"MY DEAR MISS NORTHROP :

"After many days, I answer your letter of June 2, 18—, written from Dover nearly a year ago, and addressed to me at the Club.

"It was delivered to me today, here in Eton. I inclose its envelope to show you its fate. You will find, I think, eight different post-marks from as many different post-offices.

"Since its departure from New York, nine days after my own, much has happened. I have been busy trying every device possible to prevent my desires leading me back to thoughts of Boston, and had about concluded I had found the panacea here in Eton, where I have accepted a mastership in my old school, when your letter arrived, and proved to me the fallacy of such a conclusion; for at this writing I confess I am tempted to run back to Boston and have another of our interesting talks.

"You are a particularly happy mortal. I believe I envy you, or would if it were not a sin. You were always so cheerful and happy, that whenever I have the blues I feel like crossing the pond and having you cheer me up.

"Would you treat me as kindly as you did in the past? If so, I verily believe I would return to Boston, come what would.

"Under the circumstances I suppose your father would not consider me a welcome guest. However, I feel certain that he never entirely understood our last meeting, and hope he has forgotten it by this time. Would that I could also, for I must confess it constantly recurs to me.

"Wawona said in her last letter something about your being restless, and that possibly you might take a flyer over here, or on the continent. If you should think of it, let me know, and count me as one of your retinue."

"You see I have hastened to write at once, so as to explain the reason for my long delay in answering; if you in return will write me all the news, I promise you a long letter next time.

"Your sincere friend,

"PAUL MORRISON.

"August 16, 18—."

CHAPTER IX.

FANNY NORTHROP had quite surprised Frank Jender by the way she kept her resolution to cultivate her more elevated and mental qualities at the expense of her light, gay, society enjoyments.

He began to feel she was quite Bostonese, and she herself could hardly realize she had ever had a California training in ease and abandon of manner.

The truth of the matter was, that of the lighter men she knew none seemed to her so clever as Morrison had

been, and all were brought in contrast with him by her ; so, the very tendency to be light and frivolous, brought with it its antidote ; and she had readily returned to the line of action on which she had resolved.

All growth is gradual ; and so, in general, is all dissolution. This was the history of Morrison's influence with Fanny. Within three months after his departure, she and Wawona had become much more companionable. They undertook a course of reading together, and finally took up some work in advanced French under the same tutor.

Fanny saw that her interest in these subjects was artificial ; but they, at first, served to keep her mind busy, and away from thoughts of the past, and finally became to seem natural from long habit.

Morrison's letter from Eton surprised her nearly as much as her letter had surprised him. Its receipt effaced the effect of her year's work instantaneously. She was again back to her old self, and was quite astonished to see how easily the sight of his handwriting set her heart to beating violently. She was afraid that Parker had noticed it as she handed her the letter ; and immediately determined not to open it until she had arrived safely within the sacred confines of her own room.

After having read it twice, she said to herself :

" Well, I verily believe he is caught, too. It would be awfully funny if it were not my own funeral."

She picked up the letter again.

" So he, too, has taken to books for solace."

Then there came the thought that he would write just such a letter if he were trifling with her affections, and this caused her to again analyze the letter as a whole.

" No, he has left himself too open to be flirting with me ; but I must be careful and not permit myself to be led into another ' scene in the den,' " she concluded.

At last she determined to answer him in a guarded way and to experiment to see if he were sincere, taking care, at the same time, not to appear too willing to meet his advances.

After many corrections and amendments, she satisfied herself with this response :

“DEAR MR. MORRISON :

“Your long delayed answer came today, and I am showing my appreciation of it by replying at once.

“You have neglected to notice several of my most pointed inquiries. I want them answered in your next and principally the one, ‘Why did you not succumb to my experiments?’

“I, too, have taken to literary pursuits, not in the way of becoming an instructor, but merely as a student. Wawona and I have been devoting two hours a day to study for nearly six months.

“You ask me if I would treat you as kindly as before in case you should come back? All I can say is, that I am eminently selfish and so would, of course, welcome you as the means of giving me many pleasant hours. But do you realize what a return to Boston means? You must remember that my father’s word is law, and when he says a thing he *means it*.

“By the way, you are mistaken. My father *did* understand our last scene in the den. How do I know? Not through him directly. He always finds some delicate little way to hint, which explains everything

“You see, about two days after I returned from Dover, I was waiting with him for the coachman to bring up the carriage and drive us over to Malden for a call. It was quite dark. He was on the step below me. I leaned over and kissed him. He pretended to be quite disconcerted, and said jokingly, ‘Be careful, be careful, Fanny,

Job might see you and fancy I was Mr. Morrison.' I did not say anything, but I knew then that he knew, though he has not referred to the subject since.

"I know you would have to completely rearrange your plans to return here. So I feel you would hardly find yourself recompensed by one of our 'interesting talks,' as you so kindly call our chats. Still, if it does you any good to know it, I will confess that the memory of the hours spent in conversation with you are remembered as some of the pleasantest of my life, and I sincerely hope that when you again return to Boston we can have more of them.

"We have been having quite fair weather of late, but tonight there is one of our erratic thunder storms. Frank Jender is here even more than usual; but I forgot, you never met him, did you? He is a sort of cousin to us, you know, one of the kind of boys you can have for a brother, without being fearful that they may propose.

"Now I feel I have quite complied with your conditions, and can expect the promised 'long letter' in reply.

"Please do not forget to answer my unanswered questions.

"Your sincere friend,

"FANNY NORTHROP.

"NORTHROP HALL,

"September 10, 18—."

When she had finished the letter she half determined not to send it.

She feared at first that he might think her altogether too easy prey; and then, she felt that if she missed this opportunity to put him to a test, she might lose the chance of her life to prevent the man of her choice marrying

some one whom she was almost certain he did not care for as much as he did for herself.

At length, to end all vacillation she addressed it and rang for Parker.

"Parker, I want you to mail this letter at once."

"Yes, ma'am," Parker answered.

Then came the thought :

"What if Frank should know I am corresponding with him?"

She started to call Parker back, and tell her to be careful and mail it herself, when she recollected that the girl was always discreet, and also that such an order would cause the dear old servant to become suspicious. She dismissed the thought and determined to trust to her order being obeyed.

Had she remembered how careful Parker was not to expose her ancient person out of doors on blizzardly nights, she would have wavered in her trust.

As it was, that good old servant meekly waited until Frank Jender was ready to go home after a call he had been making on the family, and following him to the front door, slyly asked him to mail the letter for her.

How was she to know that such an act was to occasion the frustrating of her beloved Fanny's dearest wish?

Frank Jender put the letter in his overcoat pocket. By the time he had jumped four or five mud puddles in a wild attempt to catch a car, he had forgotten all about it.

When he arrived at his rooms and took off his much soaked coat, he noticed it, and said with a petulant air :

"Hang it, there's Parker's letter."

He took it out, and was about to place it on his work table to insure certain notice in the morning, when the address caught his eye.

"What's this?" he almost yelled, "'Paul Morrison'"

in Fanny's handwriting ! What can have come over the girl ?”

At first he felt he ought to open the letter and see if he could not prevent a great harm being heedlessly done to the two friends he loved as sisters, but he at once dismissed the idea as a breach of honor too heinous to be entertained for an instant.

“But I can forget to mail it !” he said to himself, and forthwith he proceeded to put it in the fire, so that he would not forget to forget.

Had he known how he was hindering fate from extricating his two best loved friends from their unhappy entanglements, he would have preferred putting his right hand in the flame rather than the letter.

Had he known what bitter self-reproaches Fanny Northrop later on unnecessarily cast upon herself for having been too warm in an answer to a letter which she was made to feel was only intended to be a friendly one, and not intended to try her feelings toward him ; had he known that by preventing Morrison from answering her letter he had almost driven her insane from shame at having twice humbled herself, by being too willing to receive the approaches of a man whom she thought loved her—he would have willingly permitted his whole right arm to follow the hand.

Now, blissfully ignorant of all this, he thought he was preventing a heedless girl from interfering with his beloved Wawona's love affair.

CHAPTER X.

"FRANK, I would like to see you in my library when you are at leisure," said Amos Northrop to Frank Jender, as he was chatting with Fanny and Wawona in the "den," about a year and a half after the episode referred to in the last chapter.

"Yes, uncle," Frank said, wondering what could be the occasion for the unusual request. "I am at leisure now." He followed the banker into his sanctum.

"Take a seat, Frank. I want to have a talk with you on a very serious subject. You know, I suppose, that Wawona is engaged to be married to Mr. Paul Morrison?" he said, coming to the point at once in a business way. "Have you any idea why he is marrying her?"

"No," answered Frank. "I suppose because he loves her."

"Have you any reason to suppose he cares for any one else?" he asked, looking directly at the boy.

Frank flushed; he did not like to be a tale-bearer on Fanny. He determined to evade the question.

"I have never met Mr. Morrison, you know."

"That is not an answer to my question. This is too serious a matter for us not to be open and frank. I have given my word, and if I cannot have it recalled, I will live up to that word to the letter so long as I have life. What I want to know is, how deep his interest is in Fanny? And with what intensity she responds to that interest?"

Frank reddened as if he were making a confession himself. He started to speak two or three times, before he finally said:

"Uncle Amos, I can't answer that question without breaking a confidence."

"That is right, Frank. I honor your principle, but in this case there is too much at stake to stand on such a fine point of breeding in a private conference with the guardian of one and the father of the other of two of the interested parties. I wish you to tell me all you know — for I shall have to take a very serious step in a few days."

"Well," Frank said, after a little thought, "I think Fanny was in love with him when he left, but that she has recovered herself now."

"Why do you think that?"

"Because—" he hesitated again, but finally said: "I will tell you all I know, and you can judge for yourself."

And forthwith he related everything: about the talk he had with her after her return from Dover, and also about the letter he destroyed.

"Frank," the banker said, when the young man had finished, "I should almost feel justified in opening that letter if I had it here now."

Then he studied a few minutes, as if trying to determine upon his course.

"I can see no way out of it. I intend to live up to my word, strictly. I promised Mr. Morrison that he should marry Wawona the day my guardianship ended; that will be on June 5th, a little more than four months from now. Wawona still stays true to him, is having her trousseau made and so, I suppose, I can do nothing else than arrange for the wedding. I desire you to take charge of the affair, Frank, and carry out my promises to the letter; nothing more, nothing less.

"I promised to give them the handsomest wedding that Boston could afford, and to settle twenty-five hundred dollars a year on Wawona, and that they should be

married the day my guardianship ceased—provided he remained in Europe three years. Arrange all the details in strict compliance with my promise.”

“But how can he be in Europe three years?” Frank asked.

“I do not care,” he answered almost doggedly. “If Wawona insists on the marriage, arrange it so that he comes to my house to be married the night of his wedding, and leaves it after the ceremony is performed. My sister’s daughter will always be welcome to my house—he, never!” This was said firmly and rather harshly. Then his voice softened a little, as he added :

“You had better have a consultation with Wawona, and arrange it as nicely for her as you can ; but live up to my directions strictly, and see that he lives up to his promises.”

Everything was bustle and hurry about the Northrop household from that time on.

Wawona could not understand her uncle, but gave way to his ideas, as the thought that she was marrying contrary to his wishes made her very miserable, and she did not care to have him feel any more unkindly toward her than she could help.

At Morrison’s suggestion, she had prevailed on Frank to try to arrange with her uncle to have the wedding a week later, so that the fiancées might have a few days together before the wedding, but the old banker was inexorable.

“The wedding shall take place exactly as I promised, and not otherwise,” he had said to Frank, and that young gentleman knew by his tone there was “no power in the tongue of man to alter him.”

Ever since his conversation with his uncle, Frank had tried to have a talk with Fanny, but she evaded him unless some third person was present. He knew that she

felt he suspected she was not entirely cured of her interest in the "black bass."

When Wawona had asked Fanny to be a bridesmaid she had attempted to excuse herself on the ground of superstition, because she had already been a bridesmaid twice that year. She was afraid, she said, of the old adage: "Thrice a bridesmaid, never a bride." However, she at last consented to act.

Frank began corresponding with Morrison, and, after considerable writing everything was at last arranged.

Morrison was to arrive in New York on June 2d, and to come to Boston on the evening of the 5th. Mr. Northrop had been forced to consent that he should be in America before the time set, but satisfied himself by requiring, more strictly than ever, that he should not be in Boston until the termination of his guardianship.

His conditions were submitted to with comparatively little protest. "We can make up for lost time afterward," Wawona had said.

Finally, one day about five weeks before the wedding, Frank and Wawona were reading Morrison's unwilling assent to her guardian's conditions. The boy suddenly turned to her and said:

"Is n't it odd that I have never seen Mr. Morrison, Wawona? I have talked of him, written to him, heard of him nearly every day, and he is even going to marry my dearest friend, yet I have never seen him."

"It is, is it not? I never thought of it before. Wait one moment; I will run upstairs and get his last photograph, which he sent me about a month ago from the 'Oaks.'"

While she was away, Frank had dropped into a brown study, thinking of Fanny and her feelings. So when she handed him the picture he at first glanced at it absent-mindedly, intending merely to say, "Thank you," and

return it. His intentions were materially changed the instant the face caught his eye.

He started; looked at it again; this time took in the whole detail; then looked down at the name of the photographers to see if it had really been taken in London.

It was the exact picture of his friend, Paul Cameron!

"You are fooling me, Wawona; this is not his picture?"

"Yes it is. Why do you ask? Have you seen him before?" she asked in rapid succession.

A flood of thought came pouring over his brain. The fact that she had always said Morrison looked like her former lover, her uneasiness when he mentioned Cameron the day when Fanny and he discussed religion, Cameron's uneasiness at the mention of Wawona's name that day in the laboratory—all came flashing across his brain.

He determined to evade her question until he could have time to gather his disconcerted wits, and so answered:

"I was only joking, Wawona. He is a much handsomer man than I thought. I didn't know he wore a beard."

"He has grown one at my request in the last six months."

Then, to Frank's infinite relief, the maid came in and summoned Miss Brooke to attend a fitting with the dress-maker, who was awaiting her in the work-room.

"So this is the reason why Mr. Cameron does not go into society!" he said. "And I verily believe he still loves her, and—" hesitating,—he was about to say, "and she does him," when he determined that it was a problem too difficult to decide off-hand.

He attempted half a dozen times to gather up courage enough to go to his uncle with the whole story, but each

time found himself deciding that he was not certain of his facts, and might be borrowing trouble.

This was on his mind for the next three weeks. He had vaguely determined to take his first opportunity to question Cameron, and find out if he was in reality the old lover, for whom he felt certain Wawona had a lingering fondness.

The preparations for the wedding, however, kept him so busy that he had been unable to find time enough to make the attempt.

One evening, happening to be out at Cambridge, he suddenly came across Cameron. The resemblance to the photograph was most striking, the expression, the eyes, the beard—everything the same; not a detail missing.

"What is the matter, Frank? Why are you staring at me in that way?" Cameron finally asked him.

"Oh, nothing; was I staring at you?" Jender replied, trying to appear innocent, as he suddenly realized that he must be very discreet in his inquiries or their intent would be misinterpreted.

"You see, I have so much on my mind at present, I hardly know what I am doing. By the way, I am going to insist on your coming to a party at my uncle's house in a week or so."

Had Frank suddenly offered to shoot his friend he could not have created greater disturbance in the poor fellow's mind. He blushed, became nervous, and finally stammered:

"No, Frank; really, I cannot," he said nervously, and interjectedly added, as he blindly groped from one excuse to another, "you see, I have not been in society for so long I could not; besides, I would have to shave my beard. And then, I have not been invited."

A happy thought came to Frank. It almost took him

off his feet. He would have danced for joy had he been alone — the problem was solved ! It all flashed across him in an instant. He must get Cameron at the wedding with his beard unshaven ; and then, if Wawona was actually in love with him, she would, of course, postpone the marriage with Morrison. No, — he must have him see Wawona before the wedding.

This decision arrived at, he determined to defer further experiments till he could have an opportunity to decide upon the detail of his plan, so he answered :

“Oh, you will be invited. I am master of ceremonies.”

Frank resolved to develop a new line of conversation, in order to gain the necessary time for formulating his plan of action, but before he could do so, Cameron asked :

“Are you going to neglect your work entirely, Frank?”

“Oh, no, I will be back at work, and all the more enthusiastic when I have this little affair off my hands. But I must return to town. Good night.”

He could not get the thought out of his head, that his two idols loved each other ; and he, powerless little-hero worshiper that he was, was one of the instruments making preparations for his heroine to marry another.

He dared not discuss the affair with his uncle. He was afraid to approach Wawona. He was not absolutely certain that Cameron would give up his ambition for his love. So all that seemed left for him to do was to bring them together the night of the wedding, and see if their meeting would not cause Wawona to feel she was marrying the wrong man.

“But will Cameron come ? That is the next problem,” he said to himself, as he entered the Northrop mansion. “I’ll fix that. I’ll ask Wawona to write a personal invitation to a friend of mine, without letting her know who he is.”

CHAPTER XII.

At length all is finished, and in readiness for the ceremony.

It is to be a home affair. Frank has everything well in hand, and is radiant over the success of his plans.

He has developed a scheme which he feels certain is going to bring Cameron and Wawona together the night of the wedding.

He had prevailed upon Wawona to write a personal invitation to an unnamed friend for him, saying : " Frank has spoken of you so often, I cannot but follow his suggestion, and insist that you be present a week from Thursday night. Every one will see that you are made perfectly at home."

Frank had dictated it in order to be absolutely certain that she would not say anything about it as a wedding.

He had already given Mr. Cameron the idea that it was to be merely a party ; for he feared that if his instructor knew it was to be the wedding of his former love, it would interfere with the possibilities of his romantic little plot.

He had very cleverly persuaded Cameron to promise to go to the party, and also to permit him to arrange for his dress suit. Frank had induced him to have his beard trimmed in English style, in exact imitation of the picture of Morrison which Wawona had shown him. Afterward, he had gone with him to the tailor to see him try on his dress suit.

The impulsive boy could scarcely restrain himself from telling him his plans when he saw him dressed, and he felt assured that had Wawona but a chance to see him as

he did, no one could win her from the man he felt she really loved.

There was one of the household whose actions troubled Frank exceedingly. That one was Fanny. She had not been herself for the past month, and for the last few days he had noticed that she almost openly avoided him. He determined several times to question her about the matter ; but, in the hurry and bustle of the wedding preparations, he found no opportunity. He remembered noticing in Fanny a tendency to hesitate, when Mr. Northrop suggested that he and Fanny should stand up with the bride and groom during the ceremony. But something else came up to distract his mind, and it was forgotten.

Frank tried several times to induce Mr. Northrop to relent, and reconsider his determination not to allow the groom to come to the house till the night of the wedding, because this interfered with the possibility of bringing Wawona face to face with Cameron before the time for the ceremony, but the stern old banker steadfastly adhered to his first proposition, to stand strictly to his agreement of three years before.

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The eventful night arrived. Frank felt that everything was going well, and he was happy in the idea that his plan to bring Wawona and Mr. Cameron together gave such good hopes for success.

His arrangements were perfected even to the minutest detail, and he had been to report to Mr. Northrop at 7 o'clock.

The groom was to arrive at the house at 8.30 ; the ceremony was to be performed at 9 o'clock sharp. The bride and groom were to take the Shore Line for New York at 10:30, and from there an extended trip through the West.

Mr. Northrop approved the plans.

"There, Frank," he said, handing the boy a check, "is twenty-five hundred dollars for Wawona's first year. The agreement for the balance is in this envelope. The wedding ring is there in that box. I am proud of the way you have arranged this affair, and when you are married I will do even more for you. There is one thing more I must ask of you, and that is, insist that everything shall be exactly on time. Remember, with me 9 o'clock means exactly sixty minutes after 8 o'clock."

"Never fear, uncle," Frank replied, pleased with his uncle's commendation; "I understand the ruling passion of your life, and you shall not be disappointed to-night"—"unless Wawona has sense enough to see that Paul Cameron is the man she really loves, and not Paul Morrison," he added to himself.

Little did he think that his subsequent conduct was to be the means of driving his uncle almost insane from his delay in management. Fate, fickle dame that she is, often makes us most sure of ourselves just before she gives some particular example of her fickleness.

As it was, Frank hastened down to instruct Job, the family coachman, to call at the Vendome for his friend Cameron, who had taken rooms there over night. Then he turned to give final instructions to the servants concerning the arrangements for the groom's reception.

Scarcely had the carriage left when Parker came to him with a most distressed look on her usually placid face.

"Mr. Jender, I want to see you a moment, please, sir," she said in an unsteady voice.

"Yes, in a second." Frank replied somewhat sharply, for he was too busy to talk to servants, and had not noticed her manner.

His mind was entirely occupied trying to develop some

plan by which Wawona could have a few moments with Cameron before the arrival of the groom.

"No, now, this instant," said Parker nervously, "this is a matter of life and death. Quick!"

There was no mistaking her tone. Frank saw that she was almost white with excitement.

"What is it, Parker?"

Then, fearing her excited manner might cause the other servants to notice them, and expecting there was something private to be revealed, he said:

"Come into the library here, and explain."

"There," she began as soon as they were alone, handing him a note in Fanny's handwriting, "read that. I think it will explain all. Miss Fanny told me not to give it to you until just before the ceremony, but I think there is something wrong, for she has gone off with the phaeton and I think she is almost crazy, so I came to you now."

A thousand conjectures shot through his mind, and made him so nervous that he could scarcely tear the envelope open. He read:

"DEAR FRANK:

"You are the only one who knows my feelings in this matter. I cannot see him wedded to another. Make what explanations you can for me. God knows what I shall do—I do not. For every one's sake, never let anybody know why I do this. Good-by.

"FANNY."

"Do what?" he thought, as he turned to the maid, and asked excitedly,

"For heaven's sake, Parker, what does this mean?"

"I do not know, sir; she has not been herself for the past two weeks. Today she has been crying as though

her poor heart would break. For the last hour she's been sobbing and talking of drowning and her grandmother's cottage at Swamscot, I'm afraid there is something wrong."

Frank knew that Fanny had been in the habit of driving down to the beach close by a cottage in which her grandmother lived, and remembering that she was thoroughly familiar with this road, he felt that it would probably be the first place her thoughts would suggest in case she, in her hysterical mood, contemplated suicide by drowning.

All this flashed through his mind, and he turned to Parker, saying :

"How long has she been gone?"

"Only about five minutes. I came to you as soon as I was sure she was going."

"What shall I do!" he exclaimed, almost beside himself. "I must explain this matter to uncle."

He rushed to his uncle's library, but found he had gone to his barber. He must go without seeing him. He rushed back to Parker.

"Do not," he said, "let uncle know anything about this note or this affair. Tell him I have received a telegram about some business which must be attended to at once, that Fanny has gone with me, and that I said if I did not return in time, to let the wedding proceed without me. Tell him the arrangements are all perfect."

As he buttoned up his overcoat he hurriedly asked :

"You are sure she started for Swamscot?"

"Yes, sir."

He bolted for the stable.

"Saddle me Miss Northrop's horse!" he shouted to the boy, who was almost speechless with surprise. As soon as the mystified young hostler had the animal sad-

dled, Frank galloped away on the fleetest horse the stable contained.

What a change in his plans the last five minutes had made!

Here he was on a wild chase for a bridesmaid at the very time he hoped to be uniting two of his best friends in the face of adverse fate.

He little suspected that he was a powerful agent in accomplishing this end, despite his journey. His very absence was doing more than his best laid schemes could have done.

Mr. Northrop was almost livid with rage when he returned and found Frank gone.

The banker realized at once that he must take the affair into his own hands, or that matters would not come off on time.

The hobby of his life was punctuality, and he hastily determined that he was not to be disconcerted by the waywardness of a boy.

So excited was he, that when a messenger boy arrived with a telegram for Jender, he dictatorially ordered the servant to take it to the room set apart for Frank as master of ceremonies, not thinking it might be of importance concerning the wedding. He probably would have been less dictatorial and less hasty, and undoubtedly more phlegmatic and irascible, had he read the contents.

"Train delayed 40 minutes ; hold the ceremony. Love to Wawona. PAUL MORRISON."

Not knowing this, however, when he saw the family carriage drive up and Mr. Cameron alight, he at once made up his mind it was the groom.

He hastily determined to receive him warmly, so the

outside world should never know, except by conjecture, that he and his ward's husband were estranged.

Acting under this impulse, he stepped forward, grasped Cameron's hand, and said :

"Welcome to our home. Wawona will be with you in a few moments."

"Thank you," Cameron answered, somewhat mystified as he thought: "Well, they are making me at home, aren't they?"

How his thoughts would have changed had he realized that he was masquerading as his English cousin.

"Here, Charley," the banker said, addressing the nearest servant, "Show the gentleman to the boudoir off Miss Wawona's room."

Then again addressing Cameron somewhat stiffly :

"I will join you as soon as I have arranged matters down stairs."

Cameron had not noticed the coldness in the last remark, for his mind was busy with the odd turn affairs were taking with him.

"To the boudoir of her room ! Well, they are 'making me at home' with a vengeance. I wonder where Frank is? I had no idea this was to be such a grand affair as these decorations indicate. Frank told me it was to be only a little party."

His surprise was increased when he was ushered into a large, handsomely furnished boudoir, evidently intended for one person alone. He had noticed that the servant had passed the general dressing room for gentlemen, and had ushered him into this apartment, so he evidently was that person.

He fancied he had detected announcements in undertones from several of the guests whom he passed, "That's he, that's he," and altogether he began to feel uncomfortably certain that he was being made a lion of.

Down stairs Mr. Northrop was trying to arrange matters without Frank's assistance, and found so many little things unattended to, that he was almost distracted.

The fear had come over him that the ceremony was not going to be on time.

His nervousness increased suddenly, as he thought of the allowance which he had made to Wawona, and the annuity and wedding ring which he remembered to have given to Frank as master of ceremonies.

He rushed to Frank's room to look for them, but did not find them.

He then thought of Fanny, and started to her room to see if she could tell him anything of them. Then, for the first time, he learned she, too, was to disappoint them, and not be at the wedding. Parker had stoically faced the music, and told him that she had gone with Frank.

By this time the banker was furious.

He had no time to ask further questions; it was now 3:40, and he had not found the papers.

Most of the guests had arrived, and everything but the papers, the ring, and Frank and Fanny were ready.

He was growing more nervous each instant.

As a last resort, he determined to try the library, where he had handed the packages to Frank, and as luck would have it, there they were, where he had placed them while talking with his nephew.

He gave a sigh of relief and had almost regained his composure, when another thought suddenly came to him.

"Frank and Fanny are both gone. I must make some new arrangements for the wedding ceremony. Where is the minister?"

He sent the first servant he could reach to ask the clergyman to meet him in his office.

Then he looked at his watch: 8.52. Would he never

come? The ten seconds required for the minister to reach his office seemed to him an age.

"Mr. Wellington, some very important matters have taken my nephew to town. I have, therefore, determined to have no best man or bridesmaid, and we will have to make some new arrangements. You will proceed without them," he said hastily.

"But, where is the marriage license?"

"Haven't you got it?" almost shrieked the banker.

"No," answered the minister; "your nephew had it."

"Wait right here. I will see if it is about the house," cried the infuriated banker, as he rushed out to make inquiries of Parker, Charley, and everyone else from whom he thought he might be able to get the least information; but all his inquiries were without result.

By the time he returned to the minister he was the personification of nervousness.

"I cannot find it, but I am absolutely certain there was one issued. Can you not marry them without it? The names of the parties, as you know, are Paul Morrison and Wawona Brooke."

The reverend gentleman hesitated an instant, and then said with a calmness which acted as a severe irritant to the already thoroughly irritated banker:

"I can marry them; but there may be some doubts as to the legality."

"Legality!" the banker stormed, "I can arrange that. You give each of the parties a little book, do you not, signed by yourself?"

"Yes," unctuously and slowly answered the minister, "containing the creed and obligations taken at the marriage."

"Well," said the banker, growing more impatient every second, "we will have a marriage by contract, in addition to the ceremony. You can write in each copy a short

contract, 'We hereby mutually agree to become man and wife,' or something like that. We can attend to that matter after the ceremony. As it is, you meet the couple under the marriage bell, and commence the ceremony as soon as they are in position, so that the absence of best man and bridesmaid will not be noticed."

He hesitated, then looked at his watch, and found to his horror that it was fifty-four seconds to nine!

"I see it is the appointed time," he remarked, and added as he rushed out of the door, "take your position, and instruct the orchestra to commence the wedding march. I will go for the bride and groom; I fear we are late."

The commanding tone almost took the breath away from the reverend gentleman, but he hastened to comply with the request.

The uppermost thought in the troubled banker's brain was, that for once in his life he must acknowledge defeat of his ruling passion — this wedding was going to be late!

He would have run up stairs to summon the bride and groom, had he not realized that he was the focus of the eyes of the assembled "four hundred" of Boston.

As it was, he made the most rapid ascent up the broad front stairs that his years and dignity would permit.

In the meantime, Cameron had first wandered around the boudoir, studying over the developments of the first five minutes of his second advent into society life, a life which he had imagined to be shut out for him forever.

"Why in the world does not Frank appear?" he thought; and then returned to wondering what Mr. Northrop meant when he said, "Wawona will be with you in a few moments."

Had he known that, with his full beard and dress suit, he was the exact image of Paul Morrison, he might have

understood the importance of his position, and been able also to have prevented himself and the woman whom he had loved in secret ever since they parted five years before, from being actors in a series of misunderstandings.

In his nervousness he had gone to a large mirror over the mantel, and was fingering his mustache, when, to his surprise, he noticed the reflection of the handsome portiere in the mirror quickly open, and then saw the charming face of her with whom his heart had been buried so long appear, radiant with smiles. She saw him turn, and of course thought him his cousin, her husband about to be, the one from whom her uncle's unhappy whims had separated her for the last three years.

"There you are!" she said, as she ran forward and threw both arms around his neck, in an abandon of affection she had never permitted herself before.

He realized that the reception was one of altogether too much warmth to be an ordinary greeting.

Immediately there followed the memory of the impressions he had gotten from his conversation with Frank Jender that day in the laboratory.

His suspicions of that time were confirmed, and he thought :

"She loves me still."

He hardly knew what to do. The ecstasy of the thought so took possession of him he could hardly think.

Wawona did not know how to interpret the absence of response to her affectionate greeting.

"Why don't you kiss me?" she said.

"Shall I?" he asked, half frightened at himself.

"Of course; I have not seen you for so long," she answered, drawing herself still closer to him.

"Oh, Paul, it seems a century since you kissed me last!"

"And to me, too," he said, thinking of that last kiss

on the train at Springfield, as he proceeded to act upon the desire of both.

After they had silently expressed themselves passionately several times, she turned, and with, as he realized, the sweetest tones a voice could utter, asked him :

“And have you found no one in this long separation you care for more than me?”

“Absolutely none,” he answered earnestly. “You are, and, ever since our last kiss have been, my life, my heart, my only thought.” Immediately he returned to the occupation which both of them had found so pleasant a few seconds before.

“And I love you more than all the world could tell,” she answered. “If the thought of affection for another should come to me, one look at your face would dispel all.”

Again they smothered themselves in an embrace.

After a little she disengaged herself sufficiently to say :

“You have been wonderfully good not to make any objections to the peculiarity of this affair. Now, for my sake, promise me you will be patient, no matter what happens tonight ; promise me you will not worry uncle. You will bear with all his brusque ways for my sake, won't you, dear?”

Cameron hardly understood her, but promised. Truth to tell, at that moment he would have promised her anything. Then he drew her to him again, and was about to say : “It seems so strange that we should have been within ten miles of each other for the last five years, and neither know the other's feelings,” when Mr. Northrop burst into the room.

“Here!” he said ; “excuse me, Wawona ; I suppose I should have knocked, but everything seems to have gone wrong. Frank and Fanny cannot be found, and everything has been left on my hands at the last moment.

We are already late, and all our friends are talking about it. Take Mr. Morrison's arm, and follow me." As he said this, he half led, half pushed them into the hall.

Cameron was so surprised that he hardly knew what he was doing.

He thought Mr. Northrop had addressed him as "Morrison," but the situation, the bustle, in fact everything alike, precluded present explanation, and the first thing he really definitely knew was, that he was going down the broad front stairway with Wawona on his arm. The next was, that he was entering the parlor, and marching up to an awaiting minister, with an orchestra playing "Mendelssohn's Wedding March."

In an instant the whole position flashed across his mind. He was to be married to Wawona.

What did it mean? Was this what Wawona meant when she made him promise to be patient no matter what happened?

It was the dearest wish of his life; but how suddenly and strangely brought about. He found no time to collect his scattered thoughts. Of course Wawona had declared she loved him. He loved her.

What could he do? Everything, everybody was ready; in fact, the minister had prepared to proceed.

He tried to prevent his erratic fancies from clouding his mind, and to collect his ideas in order to be able to act. Before he could do so, the minister, in a calm, resolute voice, began the ceremony, and Cameron found himself mechanically repeating after him: "I, Paul, take thee, Wawona, to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forth."

And almost immediately after heard his beloved repeat: "I, Wawona, take thee, Paul, to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold—"

Then he found himself slipping a ring, furnished by

the minister, on Wawona's finger, and saying: "With all my worldly goods I thee endow."

He made a mighty effort to clear his brain while the minister was pronouncing the benediction, but found himself too dumbfounded to act, to remember anything, almost that he was expected to kiss his bride and be congratulated.

He heard the minister's voice say: "May you so live together in this life that in the world to come you may have life everlasting," and summoned up courage enough to turn to Wawona to kiss her. He noticed she was unusually pale.

As he leaned over, he heard her say, tremblingly:

"Catch me; I am faint!"

Instantly all was confusion.

Assisted by the minister and Mr. Northrop, he led his bride to the library, where Parker, Mrs. Matthews, and several lady friends took charge, and loosened her dress.

"It is merely a faint," Mrs. Matthews said, "the excitement has been too much for her."

Mr. Northrop seized the opportunity to take the supposed Morrison to one side.

Cameron started to explain himself, but was prevented by the banker, who said:

"I have all the papers ready for Wawona's annuity; the minister is preparing the contracts now."

Then he suddenly seemed to have caught an idea.

"But where are your traveling traps. I have the drawing room engaged for the 10:30 train."

"Traveling traps?" asked Cameron.

Then suddenly thinking, "Oh, yes, I must take a bridal tour," he answered somewhat stammeringly:

"They are at my apartments. Frank forgot to tell me about that. I have not packed them yet."

Then resolution came to him, and he determined to make an explanation of his suspicions.

"Mr. Northrop, I fear there is some mistake in this matter ; permit—"

"Of course, there is some mistake," interrupted the banker. "You must have your traps. There has been enough delay already. The train goes at 10:30 sharp. It is now 9:16 ; I will send for the carriage at once."

"Here," he called to a passing servant, "run up stairs to the spare boudoir, and bring this gentleman his hat and coat."

Turning again to Cameron he hastily said :

"Excuse me a moment, while I order the carriage."

Off he dashed, leaving the poor fellow with his already muddled brain in a complete whirl.

The servant came down with his hat and coat, and he mechanically permitted him to put them on for him.

Hardly had he done so when the bustling, troubled host appeared.

"The carriage is all ready. You must hurry, or you will be late. Come, quick."

With that he half pushed, half led him to the carriage. Cameron told him, how he hardly knew, that his rooms were at the Vendome.

"Take Mr. Morrison to the Vendome at once, and get him back here for the 10:30 Shore train," Cameron heard Mr. Northrop command the driver as he closed the door.

He thought he was certain of the "Morrison" this time. This confirmed his former half-conceived suspicion that he had been mistaken for his cousin.

He attempted to open the door and explain the matter to Mr. Northrop ; but the carriage had already started, and the banker, half distracted on account of the many delays, had entered the house, and Job was driving pell-

well for the hotel. Then there came a doubt about whether or not he had actually heard aright.

He thought it very strange Frank should have acted as he did, and had about made up his mind that possibly Frank, knowing of his love for Wawona, had arranged this plan to bring them together.

Then again he remembered to have been mistaken by strangers at other times for his cousin, Paul Morrison.

He sat there through that wild drive, trying to determine whether the peculiar transactions of the last hour were wholly due to the similarity in appearance of his cousin and himself, or if he had in reality been married to his old love, for himself.

Before he could solve the problem the carriage pulled up at the Vendome, and Job, looking at his watch, oracularly said :

"Sure, sir, I don't think you can make the 10:30, you better take the 11:30. I think, sir, I'd better go back and tell Mr. Northrop you've changed your mind, and you can take a cab back when you're ready."

Cameron was too much engrossed in thought to put in any objections.

"Certainly ; all right ; make it 11:30."

He mechanically went to the office for his key, took the elevator, and after arriving at his room, deliberately sat down and pinched himself, to see that he was not in a dream.

At first he made up his mind he would not go back, and then he determined that the only thing to do was to return to the house and force the nervous banker to take sufficient time for an explanation, and then find out if he had really been married. After this determination, he coolly packed what few things he had at hand, and prepared to return to the office.

At once the thought came to him: "Where is the house?"

Frank had sent the family carriage for him, and he had never been there alone. He consulted the directory.

"Amos Northrop, President Fifth National Bank, res. Northrop Hall, Chester Park."

The next question was, "Where is Northrop Hall, Chester Park?"

The hotel clerk was a new arrival and did not know.

No more did the cabman whom the hotel clerk called, but he thought he could find out at the head office.

The only thing to be done was to drive to the head office. There he obtained directions.

Cameron glanced at his watch. It was 10:25.

The clerk at the cab office told him it was a twenty minutes' drive to the Northrop mansion. The coachman's idea must be accepted, and of course they must take the 11:30 train, if they took any.

CHAPTER XII.

SOME ten or fifteen minutes after Job's return from driving Cameron for his luggage, a carriage drove furiously up to the Northrop mansion, and, as soon as the cabman opened the door Paul Morrison stepped out of it, with the air of a man who knew he was late for an important engagement.

The first person he met after entering the house was Mr. Northrop. The hearty manner with which the banker received him quite astonished him. He did not know that the heartiness was entirely due to what the

banker considered his unusual promptness, (or rather the unusual promptness of his cousin counterpart,) in getting his traps, so as not to force a change of the arrangements in reference to departure by the 10:30 train.

"I am sorry to have kept you waiting, Mr. Northrop, but everything has been arranged so peculiarly we could hardly hope to get through without some mishap," Morrison said, as soon as he had recovered from his astonishment. "Have you been waiting long?"

"Not at all," answered the banker, quite cordially for him. "You are here much sooner than I expected. Wawona and the minister are waiting for you in the library. I was afraid we would be compelled to accept Job's suggestion, and have your drawing-room changed for the 11:30. I am glad your promptness has prevented the necessity; but you will have to be expeditious, and so you had better go to the library at once. I will join you as soon as I obtain the papers you left a few moments ago."

Morrison was so preoccupied in thinking of the peculiarity of meeting the minister and bride in the library, that he failed to notice the allusion to his having been in the house a few moments before. He could not understand exactly what all the bustle meant; but he hurriedly determined to follow the banker's instructions, and go to the library.

There, to his surprise, was Wawona, with all her wraps on, ready for instant departure.

"Oh, Paul!" she said, as she kissed him, "how strange this all is. Everything seems to have gone wrong."

"Yes," he answered, "I cannot comprehend why all this hurry is being made. I consented to all these arrangements merely because I did not want to put your uncle to any more trouble than I could help. But where is Mr. Jender?"

"That is what is the matter. It is very strange that neither Frank nor Fanny is here."

"But where are they?" asked Morrison.

"Heaven only knows," answered Mr. Northrop, coming in just at that moment.

Then he turned to the minister:

"Mr. Wellington, have they signed those contracts?"

"No, I have them all prepared however," the minister answered rather flurriedly; the bustling of the nervous banker had begun to tell on even his apparently nerveless temperament.

"Mr. Morrison, you sign there, and Mrs. Morrison, you sign here."

"We are not going to be married by contract, are we?" Morrison asked, thoroughly mystified.

"This is an additional form," answered the minister, "which your uncle suggested, because we cannot find the marriage license. You see it will probably save any questions as to the legality. It is a mere acknowledgment that you and Wawona Brooke have become man and wife, which," he said jokingly, "I now pronounce you."

"But is there going to be no ceremony? No witnesses?" he asked in rapid succession.

"This completes the ceremony," Mr. Northrop interrupted, almost crossly, as if he thought the Englishman were casting a slur upon the American ceremony. "Mr. Wellington and I are witnesses."

A little abashed at this explanation of the affair, Morrison signed his name to the agreement, and accepted the copy the minister tendered him. Wawona did likewise, without saying a word.

"And now, Mr. and Mrs. Morrison," said the minister, trying to smooth the brusqueness of the situation, "I wish you a long life and happiness."

"And are we married?" Morrison asked, still determined, in spite of the banker's abruptness, to learn the reason for what seemed to him this almost foolhardy simplicity, not to say want of ceremony.

"As fast as the laws of Massachusetts can make you," replied the minister, becoming quite verbose in his haste to precede the banker in a reply. "That contract, a copy of which you both hold, together with your agreement in the presence of witnesses, makes assurance doubly sure, and takes a bond of fate."

Morrison hesitated a second, as if to make up his mind whether to push his doubts any further—and hastily determined that, as he had borne all the inconveniences caused by the banker thus far, it would be better to bear with this. Accepting as final the assurance of the minister, he turned to Wawona and said, as he clasped her in his arms:

"Then you are mine!"

Suddenly a thought occurred to him. He picked up his traveling-bag, and from it took a very handsome jewel-case, saying:

"I have a present for you. It was a gift to my mother at her marriage. She sent it to you with her very best love."

"Oh, how lovely!" Wawona cried, enthusiastically; and kissing him again, turned to examine the old-fashioned diamond brooch which the case contained.

"What is this peculiar little mark on the back," she asked—"like a catch?"

"I never noticed it," Morrison answered, absent-mindedly, as he turned to accept the annuity papers which Mr. Northrop, who had at that moment reëntered the room, handed him.

Wawona investigated for herself.

She pressed on what seemed to be a concealed knob,

and lo ! the whole gold back raised, and there she saw a miniature of a stern-featured man, beneath which was this inscription :

“From your long-lost brother, John Craig.”

The sudden sight of that hated name, which she had not seen for so long, nearly stunned her.

The revelation of the fact that notwithstanding her oath to her father, she was married to the nephew of John Craig, seemed in an instant to completely destroy the ecstasy of being a bride.

The unhappy scene of so long ago had never left her mind. With terrible vividness the picture of that night recurred to her. The sound of her own little voice, when she said to her dying father, “I swear never to have anything to do with John Craig or his, so long as I live,” came echoing back. The thought that she had broken that oath left her powerless for a moment, but the next moment brought with it a resolution to act at once.

All the vengeful ire of the explosive Indian blood coursing through her veins sprang to life. Only the refinement produced by careful education prevented that ire from entirely mastering her.

She felt that there must be no mistake. She nerved herself for a supreme effort. Bracing herself against the desk at which she was standing, she turned to the minister, and said in a firm voice :

“Mr. Wellington, will you kindly leave me alone with my uncle and Mr. Morrison ?”

“Certainly,” he said, wondering at her changed appearance. He turned and left the room, closing the door behind him.

The harsh tone of her voice drew the attention of both her uncle and Morrison.

She looked Paul straight in the face. Her great black eyes, ablaze with restrained feeling, gave her strong face

an almost fierce expression. She was visibly under the influence of some great excitement; yet there was no tremor in her voice when she asked him, enunciating each syllable distinctly:

"Are you a nephew of John Craig, of the Cherokee Nation?"

Morrison was thunderstruck. He hesitated, hung his head, then looked up, evidently determined to make a denial; but his startled manner and guilty confusion disclosed what his tongue dared not utter.

"You are! *You are!*" came almost in a shriek from the poor girl. The next instant she fell to the floor in a dead faint.

Her over-wrought nerves had given way.

The face of the banker was a study, as he stooped to pick up the brooch and read the inscription.

His feelings toward this man, who had already aroused his dislike by his questionable attentions to his daughter, so moved him that he could hardly contain himself.

As he turned from the apparently lifeless form of the daughter of his dead sister, his frame shook with suppressed rage.

"So, sir," he hissed, "this is your motive! You are the nephew of John Craig. My God—I don't know why I don't kill you on the spot! Go! Leave this house, and"—he suddenly hesitated, his ruling passion not to permit himself to be a party to "scenes" sufficiently taking possession of him, even in the midst of his now almost tragic grief, to make him realize that he must be circumspect in his actions or else the entire company would know more or less of the unhappy denouement.

Morrison misinterpreted the hesitation.

"Sir, give me an opportunity to explain. I—"

"None, sir!" thundered the banker, the sound of Morrison's voice having revived with even greater force the

anger which had been temporarily checked. "Leave my house at once — leave it before my feelings make me do what I shall regret! Go!"

"But permit —" Morrison was about to insist, when Parker entered the room in response to a bell the banker had rung.

"Stop — not a word," he said beneath his breath, to Morrison.

"Here, Parker, attend to Wawona, while I show Mr. Morrison out."

Wawona gave signs of reviving.

"Hurry," the banker said, almost pushing Morrison along the hall toward the side entrance. "Do not let her eyes be contaminated by the sight of you when she recovers her senses."

Morrison, nearly dazed, permitted himself to be half lead, half thrust out of the side door.

Mr. Northrop returned to the library, gave a few hasty instructions to Parker concerning her deportment toward the other servants, and ordered her to conduct Miss Brooke to her own apartments.

Then he realized that his guests must be wondering at the long absence of the bridal party.

He determined to calm himself, and return to them to make the necessary explanations.

As he passed the front door, he noticed that the servant was opening it in response to a ring of the bell. Mr. Cameron appeared, valise in hand, returning on his mission to obtain an explanation from Mr. Northrop.

At the sight of what he thought was the perfidious Morrison again, the banker, in an almost ungovernable rage, advanced to meet him. Before Cameron could enter the door, he stepped out, pushed Cameron with him, and closed the door behind them.

"Sir," he hissed, "have you not caused enough trouble

in my household? If you ever dare set foot in my house again, by the Eternal, I'll kill you, you—you—snake!"

With this imprecation he entered the house, leaving Cameron to sadly turn away, and order his carriage to return to his hotel.

His poor troubled mind could not distract itself from the problem why fate had given him this night's experience, the unhappiest, it seemed to him, that ever mortal could have suffered. He could not understand on what theory the most optimistic philosopher could find justice in thus making his already lonesome life infinitely more sad and lonely because of that one passing glimpse of what happiness might have been his had he been permitted to reënter the social world with Wawona for a companion.

What return was fate making him for the blameless life he had always led? What return for his uncomplaining acceptance of reverses in fortune?

Why should his fidelity to his love for this girl, which had made him give up all thoughts of social enjoyment without her, be made the means of causing him this increased sorrow?

Why had that fleeting ecstasy of love been changed into the perfect agony of loss by one swift transition?

He recalled a sonnet memorized in the long ago :

"To look upon the face of a dead friend
Is hard ; but 'tis not more than we can bear,
If, haply, we can see peace written there—
Peace after pain, and welcome so the end,
Whate'er the past, whatever death may send ;
Yea, and that face a gracious smile may wear,
If love till death was perfect, sweet, and fair ;
But there is woe from which may God defend,
To look upon our friendship lying dead,
While we live on, and eat, and drink, and sleep—

Mere bodies from which the soul has fled—
And that dead thing year after year to keep
Locked in cold silence in its dreamless bed ;
There must be hell while there is such a deep.

CHAPTER XIII.

MEANWHILE Frank Jender was wildly riding after the bridesmaid in the direction of Swamscot.

As luck would have it, thanks to the speed of Fanny's own horse, he overtook the almost frenzied girl shortly before she reached the bridge.

As soon as she recognized Frank, all the sorrow she had been restraining so as not to attract attention from those whom she chanced to pass on the road, burst forth in a half sob, half wail.

Frank merely said : " I will get in and drive, Fanny."

He suited his actions to his words, after tying his horse behind the phaeton.

" But what shall I do, Frank ?" she managed to ask, through her sobs.

" Cry," he answered laconically.

She accepted his advice.

Her grandmother's house was only about a mile further on. Frank drove directly to it, Fanny meanwhile pouring out her nervous grief in deep, long-drawn sobs.

" Where are you taking me, Frank ?" she inquired.

" To your grandmother's," he answered firmly, but not harshly ; " there you can recover from this fit of nervousness without any one knowing it."

Silence followed until they arrived at the house.

As he turned to help her out of the buggy she began

to cry hysterically, and he was finally compelled to carry her in-doors.

The old lady and her one servant were very much astonished at the unusual visit, and could not understand the situation. Frank simply explained that Fanny was ill, and they had deemed it best not to return while the wedding was in progress.

Then he hurried off for a physician.

By the time they had gotten her quiet and sleeping under the influence of opiates, it was nearly ten o'clock.

Frank knew it would be fully eleven before he could get back to his uncle's house, and that the ceremony would be over. As he felt that his entrance on the scene at that late hour would occasion remark and require explanations, he assured himself that he need not hurry, and drove back slowly, giving himself time to muse over the sad termination of his phantom hopes.

Shortly after eleven o'clock he reached Northrop Hall.

Much to his surprise, instead of finding the reception at its height, he saw almost the last of the carriages disappearing. In one of those inexplicable ways the guests had learned that something unfortunate had happened, and had thoughtfully retired.

Frank could not fathom it.

Was it possible his hopes had been realized, and Wawona had deserted Morrison for his friend?

His sad, listless air left him at the thought. He rushed to his uncle's library. There he found Mr. Northrop alone, and learned that his hopes were not to be realized, for almost the first thing which met his eye as he entered the room was the book Mr. Wellington had presented Wawona, on the first page of which he saw the contract of marriage signed "Paul Morrison" and "Wawona Brooke."

Mr. Northrop was alone and at once demanded an ex-

planation. Then both described their parts in the night's romance.

The banker finally said :

"Frank, I do not know what to think of that man. He has been leading a most exemplary life for the last three years. I had almost become reconciled to the thought of the marriage. Now I fear he has ruined the lives of both my wards ; Fanny because of her blighted love, and Wawona in that he has made her break her solemn oath at her father's death-bed. What will come of it, I cannot think."

"What shall we say to our friends ?" Frank asked.

"Nothing, for the present. I am afraid we have not seen the end. John Craig has not yet shown what his part is in this affair ; so the least said, the better," answered the banker.

Frank withdrew, to try to reason out a plan for himself.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHEN Paul Morrison found himself outside the Northrop mansion he was as near being insane as one possessed of his senses could be.

The peculiar manner of this his second unhappy eviction from the house, and the strange effect the discovery of his connection with John Craig had on his wife (?) and her uncle, coupled with the odd haste and hurry in which the transactions of the last fifteen minutes had been carried on, left him so completely dazed that it was some time before he could sufficiently collect his thoughts to even decide to order a cab and drive to a hotel.

His life for the last three months had been one of constant introspective philosophizing. He felt he was doing both himself and Wawona Brooke a great wrong by consummating this marriage; but the realization of the fact that not to do so would alienate forever the only friend who had ever shown enough interest in his welfare to help him in a practical way, assisted possibly by a little Scotch determination not to be forced out of his line of action by the petty, and as he thought childish, restrictions of the Yankee banker, had caused him to complete the arrangements with Frank Jender.

When everything was settled, and he was certain that fate had left him no loophole to escape, he had written to John Craig of his intentions. The letter went by the steamer which sailed the week before he did, and merely announced the fact that he and Wawona Brooke were to be married on the 5th of June following, and that as soon as he was able to do so, he would telegraph to him the message for which his uncle had been waiting so long: "I am the husband of Wawona Brooke."

On Morrison's arrival in New York he had gone directly to the Hoffman House.

Hardly had he completed his toilet when, to his astonishment, a bell-boy appeared with a card—JOHN CRAIG.

"My uncle!—what can this mean?" thought Morrison, almost hesitating to instruct the boy to "show him up" first, as for some reason he felt an instinctive dread of meeting this man who had been so mysteriously kind to him.

Possibly the fact that the carrying out of his expressed wish had been the means of placing him in such an anomalous position with the woman he loved had something to do with this feeling.

He had never seen his uncle, but from his photograph and the tone of his letters he had pictured him as a tall,

erect, commanding backwoodsman. He was quite surprised when the boy, a few moments afterward, ushered in a rather undersized old man, bent over, apparently, with sickness.

"You hardly expected to see me yet, Paul," the uncle said as soon as he had introduced himself.

"No, I thought I should first have the pleasure of calling on you with my bride out in the Indian Territory," Morrison answered.

"Something of that sort was my original intention," the old man answered. "But I could not bear to wait. You see I have had two hemorrhages of the lungs, and the doctor tells me the next will be my last. I was afraid something would happen before I should see you."

The look of determination which came over his face as he said this proved plainly that his old firmness of purpose was still there, notwithstanding the effects of his illness.

The speech brought on a fit of coughing.

"There, there, uncle," Morrison said, alarmed at his relative's appearance, "do not distress yourself. Wait until you are rested."

"No, I must tell you now," the old man nerved himself to say. "When you are married to Wawona Brooke I have nothing more to live for ; my life's work is done. My revenge is then complete !"

"What do you mean ?" Morrison asked.

The old man was overcome by another fit of coughing. Evidently he had determined that he had said too much already, and intended to pass it over.

"Nothing, nothing," resumed Craig as soon as he had caught his breath. "You are heir to all my personal property—it will be enough—at least one hundred thousand dollars, and the land, when you are her husband—you will have control—"

"I don't understand, uncle," Morrison interrupted interestedly.

Then noticing that the old man was nearly exhausted, he rang for some stimulants.

As soon as Craig had revived, he said :

"You go about your preparations, Paul. I may go to Boston tomorrow, but I will see you here, in New York, after the wedding."

Morrison deemed it advisable not to tax the old gentleman's strength too much, as the ravages of his disease were very apparent, and he assisted him to his room without asking any further explanation of that mysterious and melodramatic allusion to "revenge."

This interview came back to Morrison with its full effect as he was driving to the hotel after his scene with his wife (?). Evidently that "revenge" was the clew to the mysterious actions of Wawona when she found he was the nephew of John Craig, and also the probable explanation of that mysterious imprecation of Amos Northrop, "You have made this poor girl break her oath to her father at his death-bed !"

What it all meant he could not fathom ; he felt that the only course left for him was to see his uncle and demand an explanation.

By the time he arrived at the hotel and was installed in his apartments, he had worked himself into a ganglionic fever.

All sorts of fitful conjectures were weaving themselves around savage Indian chiefs, death-bed oaths, and awful revenges. They left his mind so entangled that he had about concluded to defer his attempt to unravel the situation until morning, when there came a rap at the door.

To his surprise it was the bell-boy, with his uncle's card. In his present nervous state his first impulse was to order the boy to announce that he would not see him

until morning — and then a determination to bring to a conclusion this unhappy and awful uncertainty, and to press the matter to its “bitter end,” prompted him to instruct the boy to admit him.

As John Craig entered, Morrison turned and handed him the book and contract which the minister had given him, saying in a tragically despondent voice :

“I am the husband of Wawona Brooke, and the unhappiest man on the face of the earth.”

“Thank God! Thank God!” said the old man, as he read the announcement of the marriage on the first page of the book, not appearing to notice his nephew’s other announcement.

“Now, uncle,” Morrison said firmly, “I have paid the debt I owe you, and in doing so have wrecked the happiness of myself and two women, one of whom I love better than my life. What do you propose to do?”

With this he disjoinedly, almost fiercely, told of the occurrences in the Northrop library, and his eviction from the house.

“And you do not love Wawona Brooke?” asked the old man, a look of joy stealing over his face.

“I do not,” answered Morrison dejectedly, the vehemence of his anger having been toned down to dejection by the master will force of his uncle, a power which had subdued his passion even before it found opportunity to vent itself.

“And you do love Fanny Northrop?” he inquired.

“Yes,” Morrison replied, with a deep sigh, after a slight hesitation.

“’T is well, ’t is well,” mused the old man, as if to himself, apparently having forgotten his nephew’s presence.

Finally he walked over to Morrison, and said in the firm tone of a man who is accustomed to command :

“You shall marry her.”

"Whom?" asked Morrison, impressed in spite of his despondency.

"Fanny Northrop."

"But I am already married to Wawona Brooke."

"Yes, but we will let her have a divorce as soon as she has deeded all her interest in the lands to us. I will attend to this in the morning. Leave it all to me. Good night," and before Morrison could answer he was gone.

The poor fellow sat there, infinitely miserable. It was a relief to be alone. The towering will of his uncle left him almost helpless in his presence. He could not understand himself; his whole individuality seemed to be lost immediately upon his uncle's appearance.

His original intention had been to hurl defiance in the old man's face, but at his approach his every motive became subservient to that monster will.

He gave up all thought of independent action, and meekly submitted his future to his uncle and fate.

CHAPTER XV.

AFTER leaving Mr. Northrop, Frank Jender had gone to the room set apart for him, so engrossed in his attempt to solve the reason for Morrison's actions, that all thoughts of Cameron had passed from his mind. In fact he was so absorbed in his musings that he had taken no notice whatever of his surroundings; thus the telegram which Mr. Northrop had sent to his room entirely escaped his notice, although the servant had placed it in a conspicuous place on the mantel.

He passed a restless night and awoke very early in the morning. After tossing about in bed for a few moments,

reviewing the peculiar happenings of the evening before, the thought suddenly struck him —

“What in the world became of Paul Cameron?”

He remembered, now that he thought of it, that not one word had been spoken about Cameron and his reception by any one.

Two theories suggested themselves : one that he had changed his mind and determined not to come ; the other that he had come and kept himself in the background.

Frank made up his mind to inquire into the matter, and immediately got out of bed with that object in view, although it was not yet seven o'clock. He had scarcely commenced making his toilet when the telegram on the mantel caught his eye.

“That will explain it. Cameron weakened at the last minute, went back to Cambridge and telegraphed me,” was the mental comment as he broke open the telegram, smiling to himself meanwhile at the additional thought, — “Those educated men are such cowards.”

But the smile left his face as he read :

“Train is delayed forty minutes. Hold the ceremony.
Love to Wawona. PAUL MORRISON.”

What could this mean? His uncle had said nothing about any delay.

Again a series of attempts at explanation racked his brain ; but he knew that they were all futile.

The real truth never entered his mind. He dressed as rapidly as his tendency to come to a full stop and study over the situation would permit him, and then hastened directly to the stable to interview Job.

To his surprise he learned that Job had not only brought Cameron from the hotel to the house, but had driven him back to his hotel after the ceremony, and that

Mr. Northrop had seen him to his carriage. Would wonders never cease !

His next thought was Parker. She had been with the family so long that he could trust her by making more pointed inquiries. He did not have an opportunity to see her until after breakfast, however.

To his surprise she knew nothing of Mr. Cameron.

"I mean the man who looks exactly like Mr. Morrison," Frank said somewhat impatiently. "What became of him while they were waiting for the groom to arrive?"

"Waiting for the groom to arrive, when?"

"While they were holding the ceremony!" Frank answered, impatient at what he considered her stupidity.

"They did not hold the ceremony. The groom was here on time. Mr. Northrop saw that nothing was late, sir," Parker answered, puzzled at his questions. "You know well enough Mr. Northrop never allows anything to be behind time in this house."

Frank did not say a word. For the first time a suspicion of the true state of affairs came to him.

"My Paul has been married to Wawona by mistake," he thought, but immediately he remembered to have seen the book which the minister had given Wawona, containing a marriage agreement signed, "Paul Morrison." Hence, of course, this mistake must have been discovered and corrected.

"But what became of Mr. Cameron? I'll see Uncle Amos about that."

He looked at his watch; it was already 8:35. Remembering Mr. Northrop's habit of leaving for the bank at a quarter of nine, he hastened to the library.

He found his uncle with a very worried countenance.

"Frank, I am glad to see you; be seated. I was about to send for you."

"I am delighted to have saved you the trouble, uncle.

I have something I want to ask you about last night. I—”

“Yes,” interrupted the banker. “But I have something of more importance which I want you to help me with. I must leave in a few moments, for I want to consult my attorney before going to the bank, as I try never to allow my private affairs to interfere with my banking hours.”

Turning to his desk he picked up a letter.

Frank was so impressed with the banker’s air of serious concern that, for the time being, all thought of Cameron’s affairs left him.

“I received this letter by the morning’s mail. I want you to go to ‘Parker’s,’ and judiciously obtain all the information you can concerning the writer. It reads:

“BOSTON, MASS., June 6, 18—, 1 A. M.

“AMOS NORTROP,

“*Dear Sir:*

“My nephew, Paul Craig Morrison, a few moments ago informed me of last night’s transactions.

“He sees that you are attempting to estrange his recently-made wife from him.

“I, therefore, feel it is time I should explain my position. I shall be brief.

“Wawona Brooke, as the daughter of John Brooke, has an interest in the title to the lands of the Cherokee Nation.

“At her marriage the control of that interest by the laws of the Nation passed to her husband. Your attempt to estrange his wife from him injures him to such an extent that I am about to advise him to commence an action for damages against you. He is very loathe to take such a step, but is ready to follow my advice. Possibly, under the circumstances, it would be

better for him to permit you to advise Mrs. Morrison to give him, or rather me for him, a quitclaim deed to any and all interest she may have in the Cherokee lands in consideration of his dropping the matter entirely, and leaving the State ; so that, in course of time, she may be divorced from the nephew of the man who was once a fellow-chief with her late father,

“ My nephew does not know of this letter ; but I feel certain he will follow my advice.

“ The matter must be attended to immediately. I will call at your house at four o'clock this afternoon, June 6th, to receive your answer. I shall have a deed ready for signature.

“ Yours, etc.,

“ JOHN CRAIG.”

“ That is the letter of a shrewd schemer ? You see he is too clever to make the proposition direct from his nephew. They have at last shown their hand. This evidently has been their whole animus in the matter. We cannot permit Wawona to be in any way connected with this rascal ; neither can we permit her to break her oath to her father,” he said nervously, as he folded the letter and put it in his pocket. Then turning to Frank, who sat seemingly dazed, he remarked : “ I must go now and consult our attorney. Be discreet in your inquiries, Frank, and report to me at the bank. Learn all you can. Good morning.”

Poor Jender continued to sit there, pondering over the revelation of perfidy contained in that letter for some time, finally commenting :

“ And to think that poor Wawona is married to such a wretch ! ”

Then the suspicions which had brought him to his uncle suddenly returned to his mind.

"Is she?" he thought. "Suppose she was married to Paul Cameron first by mistake?"

He almost leaped for joy.

His first thought was to rush after his uncle and explain his hopes, but the remembrance of the contract signed by Morrison made him determine to first hunt up Cameron, and be certain of the facts.

The telegram from Morrison asking for the delay, Job's certainty of Cameron's presence, and Parker's certainty that the ceremony was not delayed, left a last lingering ray of hope that Cameron had been married in Morrison's place by mistake—due to their exact similarity in appearance, in spite of the contract signed by Morrison.

He determined to go at once to his friend, and learn from his own lips what part he had played in the unhappy proceedings.

At the Vendome he found that Cameron had returned to Cambridge quite early.

Frank hastened to his apartments, learned he was out, and would not return till one in the afternoon.

The delay drove him nearly frantic. He could not decide whether to return to "Parker's," and make the inquiries concerning John Craig for his uncle, or to continue his search for his friend.

He finally determined on the latter course, and rushed over to the laboratory. There he found that Cameron had left for his rooms but a few moments before. Frank followed. This time he was in. Jender immediately concluded from his appearance that something very serious had happened.

"Oh, it is you, is it, Frank? I am glad to see you, and yet I feel like being angry with you. Were I not sure that fate, for some unknown reason, has given me this keen agony, and that you were a mere factor in her

hands, I should feel harshly toward you. Where were you last night?"

"I was called away by a matter of life and death only a few moments after I sent the carriage for you. There has been an awful calamity at our house, and I want you to help me get at the bottom of it. Mr. Cameron, please explain to me all you know of the affair," the boy asked awkwardly, not knowing how to commence.

"Do you not know? Has your uncle not told you?" he asked, never dreaming that Mr. Northrop did not know of the mistake, having accepted the exclamations during his last interview with him as conclusive proof on that point.

"My uncle has explained nothing except that Wawona was married to Paul Morrison last night; that Morrison gave her a diamond brooch for a wedding present, and that in examining it she discovered he was the nephew of John Craig, the man who had ruined her family and murdered her father and grandfather, and that she had taken a most solemn oath to her father on his death-bed to have no connection with him whatever. Since then I have read a telegram which, unhappily, I did not see until this morning, announcing to me, as master of ceremonies, that Paul Morrison was on the train which was delayed forty minutes."

Up to this time Cameron had been listening in a dull, heavy way—his own acute unhappiness for the last eighteen hours having apparently so clouded his mind as to prevent his face from displaying any expression of appreciation for the excessive sorrow which he knew she whom he so dearly loved must be suffering on account of the unhappy incidents Jender was relating.

But this last announcement brought him to himself at once

Frank's heart gave a bound as he noticed his expression change, and he continued in his nervous way :

"I learned from the servants that, notwithstanding this, the wedding took place without delay, and the fact that no one could tell anything of your whereabouts left me to indulge in all kinds of fantastic conjectures. I have come to you for a full explanation."

"Do you not know? Has your uncle not explained?"

"Know? What?"

"The unhappy part I played."

"No; please tell me."

Cameron was speechless. He scarcely knew how to explain. In his modesty he had been castigating himself all night over his conceit which he felt had permitted him to think that Wawona's caresses had been intended for him and not his cousin counterpart, and had led him into being such an important factor in her present unhappiness.

He hesitated for a second, and then determined to swallow all pride and confide the matter in full to Frank, whom he felt to be a friend sincere enough to judge leniently.

"Well, thinking that I was going to attend a party, and not knowing it was to be a wedding, and not imagining the connection of my cousin, Paul Morrison, with Wawona—"

"His cousin—that explains it," Frank thought.

He could have shouted for joy, and almost pinched himself to keep from interrupting his friend.

"I entirely misunderstood Mr. Northrop's welcome. The telegram you spoke of explains the matter. You probably do not know that five years ago I and Wawona Brooke were—I was going to say engaged to be married; but to be more accurate will say, that without having definitely proposed because of the indefiniteness of my

prospects we had acted as if there were an engagement for a short time, **and** then a series of untoward incidents broke off our intercourse—”

The unhappy recital made him sigh, and he hesitated an instant.

“Go on! Go on—tell me about last night!” Frank urged, almost beside himself with expectancy.

“So,” his instructor continued, too much wrapped up in his own thoughts to properly appreciate the boy’s eagerness, “when I was shown to what I now know to have been Mr. Morrison’s apartments, and Wawona met me with open arms, I was fool enough to suppose she loved me still, and not knowing that she was about to marry my cousin, whom I know to resemble myself very closely, I idiotically accepted her caresses as a renewal of our relationship, the invitation which you caused her to write me giving my conceit the grounds to persuade myself into that unhappy conclusion. Thus prepared, the peculiarity of my former connection with her left me to wholly misunderstand her conversation. I was indulging in a caress intended for another when your uncle entered, and announced that everything was late, and then, without giving me an opportunity for explanation,—in fact before I knew any explanation was necessary—he rushed us down to the parlor. There, to my surprise, I found myself, with Wawona, facing the minister.

On account of the precipitate haste of every-one to commence the ceremony, my already puzzled brain permitted me to misconstrue your actions, and for the instant to delude myself into believing that you had determined that this marriage was the wish of both, and had taken that means to surprise me. Luckily, Wawona fainted when I turned to kiss her, and your uncle, without permitting me to explain my doubts, bundled me into my carriage, so that I could get back to my hotel for my

traps. As I entered the carriage I heard him instruct the driver to take 'Mr. Morrison to the Vendome.' Then, for the first time, I understood the situation. I had felt all along that there was a mistake ; but in the first place, my insane love for Wawona, revived by her caresses, left my mind in anything but a clear state ; and then the unusual and precipitate haste of your uncle and the minister, together with the rapidity with which everything happened, left me no opportunity to ask for an explanation without causing a most serious commotion.

"Well, to be brief, I went to my hotel, trying to unravel the situation. I then determined to return and be certain that my suspicions of the error were correct. As you know, in the mean time the mistake had been found out and corrected, and your uncle properly, though I must say unnecessarily very forcibly, ordered me out of the house."

He had not noticed the expression of delight which had come over Frank's face, and was consequently startled at his unexpected ejaculation :

"Thank God ! Thank God !"

"What do you mean ?" he asked.

"Mean !" almost shouted the boy. "Why, my idiotic pranks and your peculiar connection with last night's proceedings have thwarted the plots of a couple of the vilest villains the world ever saw."

Then, realizing that in his melodramatic excitement he was losing valuable time, he said :

"Enough of this ; come with me, quick. I must tell my uncle about this at once. Come, I will explain it all to you in the carriage." He pulled Cameron, now almost thoroughly convinced that he and all his friends had become insane, into the first cab he could find.

On the way Frank explained his suspicions : that the mistake had not been rectified, that Cameron was in re-

ality the husband of Wawona Brooke, and that, unwittingly, he had saved Wawona from being the victim of John Craig and his scheming nephew.

He incidentally mentioned his conversation with Miss Brooke when she had referred to his companion, and almost gave him hope by saying :

“Absolutely, Mr. Cameron, I am convinced that she merely persuaded herself she loved Morrison because of his resemblance to you, and, in reality, she has always been and still is in love with you, and you alone.”

Mr. Northrop was probably never more surprised in his life than when Frank bolted into his private office at the bank with his friend.

His surprise was followed by perfect amazement when Frank said, “Uncle Amos, permit me to introduce to you Mr. Paul Cameron, my very dear friend and instructor, of whom you have heard me speak so often. Mr. Cameron — Mr. Northrop.”

The banker took his hand in a mechanical way, not having recovered from the shock at hearing he was not Morrison.

“Let me explain everything, uncle ; my idiotic pranks have come to some service at last. I think they have saved Wawona from those devils,” and forthwith he proceeded to relate in detail to the now thoroughly antonished listener his and Cameron’s connection with the romance of the night before.

Mr. Northrop looked at his watch, 2:15, — business hours, but for once in his life he broke rules, and permitted social life to interfere with his routine work.

“Please come over to Mr. Curtis, our attorney. We must understand the effect of this peculiar marriage immediately,” the banker said, so soon as he had apologized to Cameron for his brusqueness of the evening before.

When they had set forth the facts of the matter in full to the attorney, he deliberated a short time and then said :

“ Well, that is apparently a very knotty problem. My opinion, without referring to the authorities, is, that Wawona Brooke is married to no one.

“ The marriage with Paul Morrison is probably void, at all events is voidable, as our statutes do not provide for a marriage by contract. The other marriage is a little more difficult. Marriage is a civil relation arising out of a contract. And a contract must be made by the meeting of two or more minds on one and the same proposition : that is to say, they must each and all agree to the same thing in the same sense at the same time. Now, if at the time Wawona Brooke pledged, “ I take thee, Paul,” during the ceremony, she meant Paul Morrison, and not Paul Cameron, she did not agree to the same thing in the same sense that Mr. Cameron did when he took his pledge ; hence there was no contract, and consequently no marriage—”

“ Of course, the only person who can testify to that intent is Miss Brooke, herself,” Frank suggested in a hopeful voice. “ And if she is willing to say that she meant Paul Cameron, then she is married to him, is she not ? ”

The lawyer did not answer at once, he pulled down two or three books, and referred to several others, then said :

“ The General Statutes of Massachusetts provide that a marriage is not to be ‘ deemed or adjudged void, nor shall the validity thereof be in any way affected, by want of jurisdiction or authority in such person ’ (meaning the minister in this case) ‘ if the marriage is in other respects lawful, and is consummated with a full belief on the part of the persons so married, or either of them, that they have been lawfully joined in marriage.’ And it is my opinion, from the decisions interpreting that statute, that

if Miss Brooke asserts it was her intent to marry Paul Cameron at that time, and the marriage is consummated, that it is legal.

“To be perfectly safe, I should advise, however, that they have the minister re-perform the marriage ceremony. And that he be seen at once, so that the record which the law requires he shall keep, and a copy of which he must return each month to the clerk, will show that she was married to Paul Cameron, and not to Paul Morrison. This being done—the record being straight—we must find some means to obtain and destroy that book containing the contract, now in the hands of Paul Morrison. For while it is not binding, it would be a very serious piece of evidence in case the matter was brought into court, as it might force us, for safety’s sake, to file a libel in order to have a legal adjudication of nullification of the alleged contract. However, for the purpose of dealing with this man, John Craig, this afternoon, if Miss Brooke is willing to claim that she intended to marry Paul Cameron when she entered into the contract before the minister in the presence of witnesses, and is willing to complete the marriage with him, we can treat him as her husband.”

Frank had a wild idea of dancing a jig or doing something else equally idiotic, but finally quelled himself on account of the solemnity and dignity of his company.

After considerable discussion it was determined that Frank and his friend should return to Northrop Hall at once. The former was to interview Wawona to see if his theory as to her feelings were correct, and in case they were, she and Mr. Cameron were to appear at the 4 o’clock conference with John Craig. Mr. Curtis and Mr. Northrop were to follow at 3 : 30 to hear the result, so as to be able to determine on a different plan of action in case Wawona was not to be “Mrs. Cameron.”

Upon arriving at the house Frank had Parker announce him, and then he left poor Cameron in the library while he followed the maid to Wawona's sitting-room.

Frank expected to notice that Wawona had suffered, but was unprepared to find such a change as she now presented.

All hope seemed to have left her. As he entered the room she gave him her hand and led him to a divan upon which they had often lounged on former and happier occasions.

"Frank, what have I done to deserve this awful, awful blow?" she said, in a tone pregnant with woe and hope abandoned: "to think that this, which should have been my happiest day, is the most unhappy of which mortal can conceive."

She buried her face in her hands and sobbed.

Frank determined to enter upon his errand at once, so he said, without attempting to answer her question:

"Wawona, do you remember Paul Cameron?"

She gave an involuntary start as he spoke the name, and instantly looked at him to see, if possible, what he meant; then she answered in an expectant tone:

"Yes. Why?"

"Do you remember a talk we had long ago, when you told me of a Harvard lover you once had, and how Mr. Morrison at first reminded you of him? Did you then mean Paul Cameron?" he asked earnestly.

She was equally intent in scanning his face. "Yes, and Frank—" then she hesitated, wavered an instant and finally continued, "Frank, knowing what a true friend you are to me, and knowing how you feel toward Mr. Cameron, I am going to tell you what I thought I would never say to a living being."

She dropped her eyes and gazed silently at her hands

for a few moments. Frank could hardly rest in his impatience.

At last she said, without lifting her eyes :

"Frank, I have several times thought that my whole love for Mr. Morrison was due to the fact of his resemblance to Mr. Cameron. I now know that many of the qualities which I supposed him to possess are absent; and I feel I had built in my mind's eye such a noble, ideal man around my dear memories of Paul Cameron, that when Mr. Morrison appeared, I permitted his remarkable resemblance to Paul Cameron to give him that ideal's place in my mind; and I thought, also, in my heart. The last few hours have taught me that he never did fill the place in my heart which was once occupied by Paul Cameron."

"And do you love Paul Cameron?" he asked precipitately.

"Yes," Wawona answered, calmly and sadly, the deep despondency in her tone coming in marked contrast with the hopeful inflection of the boy.

"Wawona, we are saved!" he shouted, as he took her in his arms. "Paul Cameron *is* your husband."

"What do you mean, Frank? Explain yourself."

The faithful fellow hurriedly narrated the whole affair, and the decision of the lawyer, and ended with—

"And you will have him, Wawona, won't you? I *know* he loves you."

"Have him, Frank? If you knew, as I do, how my heart has been yearning for him all these years, you—"

"Well, wait half a second, and I'll bring him up," interrupted the impetuous youth, as he rushed out of the room.

Wawona knew not what to do. Her woman's instinct—the ruling passion strong even now—impelled her to go to the mirror, and arrange her hair.

She heard footsteps, the door opened, Frank and her lover appeared.

The two looked at each other a second, then she stretched forth her arms, and said : " Paul ! "

He answered : " Wawona ! " and then they were close together, heart to heart.

Frank, though completely forgotten, was probably the happiest " third person " the world ever held.

He heard, between kisses, " My husband ! " and " My wife ! " That was enough. He immediately bolted for the library, to tell his uncle and Mr. Curtis of the success of his plans.

They hastily determined to have Wawona present at the interview, and to have Mr. Cameron stationed in the parlor directly opposite, where he could be called at a moment's notice.

Frank delayed entering " paradise," as he had mentally dubbed Wawona's boudoir, during that to him ever memorable twenty minutes, until he had, from his outlook at the front window, seen a carriage drive up at precisely 4 o'clock, and watched a hard-faced, bent-over old man alight from it.

He made all the noise he could, as he approached " paradise." He knocked at the door, and waited until he heard a voice, evidently smothered but a short time before, say, " Come in."

He hastily explained the plan agreed upon, and conducted them to the floor below.

Had John Craig seen that trio coming down the stairs, Cameron with his arm around Wawona, and the six-foot young man with his arms around both, he would have saved himself the unhappy interview.

As it was he sat near the door, waiting to see the face of his niece, the girl whom he knew had been so deeply wronged. He had expected to find her in the deepest

distress. But as she approached her uncle—not noticing him, he saw, to his surprise, that nothing but the somber hue of the dress she wore betokened sorrow.

He credited her with being a wonderful actress.

Wawona's face, as she turned to him when her uncle said, "Wawona, this is Mr. John Craig," was a study.

She confessed, afterward, that she could hardly understand herself and her own feelings, as she stood there gazing at the man who had robbed her of her lineage, who had at one fell swoop murdered her father and grandfather, and ruined the life and prospects of her mother. An almost irresistible desire to spring on him and tear him to pieces suddenly took possession of her, but as suddenly gave way to feminine pity, for the old man, who had grown uneasy under her steady gaze, was suddenly convulsed with severe coughing.

When he had recovered, he said :

"I presume we had better proceed to business at once. Mr. Northrop, as you know, you are estranging Mrs. Morrison from her husband, my nephew, Paul Craig Morrison. As I explained in my letter, it is not his desire to cause publicity in this matter, and he has agreed that if his wife signs this quitclaim deed to all her interest in the lands of the Cherokee Nation, the control of all of which during his lifetime has already passed to Mr. Morrison, we will leave this State, and you can take immediate steps to free her from what you deem an objectionable marriage."

With this he produced the deed and added :

"I have a notary waiting in the carriage."

Mr. Northrop accepted the paper which Craig offered him, and was about to speak, when Wawona prevented by saying in the same firm tone she had addressed to Morrison on the night before :

"Sir, on my father's death-bed I swore never to have

any connection, in any manner whatsoever, with you or yours, and I refuse to sign that or any other paper with which you or yours are connected."

A demoniacal expression came over the face of the backwoodsman as he hissed :

"Then your husband will drag you from this house, or else drag your name and that of your uncle into public disgrace."

To the surprise of all, a clear strong voice sounded from the door.

"No, he will not."

It was Paul Cameron!

"But if you do not leave this house this instant, and never address my wife again, her *husband* will drag you out, and will revenge the deep wrong your devilish scheming has done her people in the past!"

"Paul Cameron?" the old man gasped, as he turned to see from whom and whence the voice came.

"Yes, Paul Cameron—and thank God I became the husband of this poor girl ten minutes before she signed that contract with your rascally nephew."

"My God—" gasped the old man as he began to cough, "the fatal hemorrhage—" and blood burst from his mouth in a torrent.

Frank and Mr. Curtis hastened to place him on a lounge, while Mr. Northrop hurriedly instructed Cameron to take his bride to her apartment, and then hastened to telephone for a physician.

He might have saved himself the trouble.

The excitement had been too much for the old man. Even the iron will was nothing now. His malady had conquered. John Craig was dead!

CHAPTER XVI.

AFTER Paul Morrison had arranged for the shipment of his uncle's remains to Scotland, he turned his attention to his own affairs.

He found from examination of John Craig's papers that he was made, by will, sole heir to about one hundred thousand dollars' worth of property, mainly in cattle and live-stock in the Indian Territory.

He delayed for a time, trying to determine what course he should pursue. He would gladly have given a moiety if not all he possessed to have had an opportunity to explain himself and his part in the unhappy affair to Fanny Northrop.

When Frank Jender had come to him and asked for the book containing the contract which the minister had caused him and Wawona to sign, he had been on the point of stating his position with reference to Fanny.

But pride stepped in and he contented himself by saying :

"I trust you will inform Mr. Northrop that I was not aware of any of my uncle's reasons for action, and that knowing as I now do their malignity, I am ready to do anything in my power to relieve Mrs. Cameron from any injury occasioned by me or him in my name. Pray bear to both Paul Cameron and his wife my sincere regrets over the unenviable part I was compelled to act in the tragedy, and say that I hope to show them and you all that I am not such a villain as my unexplained actions now proclaim me."

"I will do so, and permit me to thank you very much for this book," Frank answered. His joy at obtaining

that one and only piece of adverse evidence of Cameron's marriage for the time being, prevented him from thoroughly understanding the depths of Morrison's sorrow.

But he hastened to add, as he took his hand :

"Mr. Morrison, your actions for the last two weeks certainly entitle you to belief. I shall deliver your message and can truthfully say, I pity you with all my heart."

Subsequently Morrison was several times on the point of hunting up Frank Jender with a view of righting himself, but he always met obstacles, raised by his own doubts. Principal among these was the fact that he was not certain that Fanny Northrop still retained any interest in him.

Her absence from the wedding he felt could be explained on two theories : either that she had come to hate him, and so did not care to see him again ; or that she still loved him as madly and as vainly as he did her, and so could not bear to see him married to another.

Working on his old idea that their minds were prototypical, he had tried to persuade himself that the latter theory was the correct one, but the memory of the innuendo in her last letter received at Eton, and the thought that she had not answered his letter to her in answer to it, wherein he had covertly offered to return to Boston should she give him encouragement, made him hastily dispel that hope, and accept as a certainty the conclusion that his apparent two-facedness had effaced from her mind such affection as she may have had for him in the days of long ago.

Had he but known that within those two weeks Fanny Northrop had been several times on the verge of writing to assure him she now thoroughly understood his actions and realized that he had loved her ever since that night in the "den," and that she was only deterred from doing so by remembering that the last letter she had written him

in answer to his note asking permission to return, wherein she had tacitly opened her heart to him, (the document which Frank burned) had remained wholly unnoticed, he would have hesitated not a moment longer, but would have saved himself and the only woman his erratic will had ever permitted him to love much unhappy loneliness.

Had Frank Jender known that his action in destroying the letter, handed to him by Parker that blizzard night, had created the one insoluble problem in the minds of those two now thoroughly miserable lovers, which, because of its incapability of solution, left each to think that the love for the other was in vain, and therefore so servile as to be regretted, he would have waived all thoughts of chagrin at being compelled to confess intermeddling, and told all he knew.

CHAPTER XVII.

WHEN the excitement attendant on the clearing up of the record of Wawona's marriage with Paul Cameron, and the completion of their arrangements for an extended bridal tour were over, Frank Jender found himself in almost daily consultation with Fanny's father, trying to evolve some scheme to divert Fanny's mind and remove the unhappy tendency she had developed of shunning society and allowing free vent to a morbid desire to be alone.

At last they determined on a second trip to California.

Her aunt had written, inviting her to make another visit, and at their suggestion she had accepted.

Fanny had been an absorbing study to herself. She

was much astonished at the depth of her own feelings, having always maintained to herself that her active mind could develop enough light and trivial amusement to distract it from any sorrow. But the omnipresent thought that she was losing the one soul thoroughly in unison with her own — whose very peculiarities precluded the hope of there ever existing another such peculiar one — overpowered even the activity of her mind, and left her but a sorry phantom of her old gay self.

Pride had forced her to keep up a little external show of life, but the very emptiness of her artificial happiness made her more disheartened.

And as this invitation of her aunt gave her an opportunity to enter an entirely different society, where her acquaintances would not be constantly contrasting her present moodiness with her past liveliness, she accepted it gladly.

Within a month after Wawona's marriage, and about a week after Morrison's departure for Indian Territory to administer upon the affairs of his uncle, or rather, now that he was the heir, his own personal properties, the overland train was once more carrying Fanny Northrop toward California.

Amos Northrop had written his sister a full account of the incidents attendant upon the marriage of Wawona and Paul Cameron, and Fanny's connection therewith, and had given her the final injunction :

"By all means do not permit Fanny to see or meet this Mr. Morrison. My main idea in sending her to you is to take her away from her present surroundings, where everything reminds her of him, and to put her amid new surroundings and with new people, where, I hope, she can once more gradually become her dear old self."

He knew his sister's nature, and was assured that his wish would be respected as law.

Fanny was once more installed in the same rooms she had occupied on her former visit.

So soon as she had donned a home dress she went down to her aunt's study, to nestle up to her on a huge divan, ready for a long talk.

Mrs. Gaylord was not in unison with her brother's sturdy, straight-laced Bostonian notions of propriety, and she found herself very much interested in the man Morrison, even from Mr. Northrop's biased description of him.

Ordinarily she would have been so interested in him, and in Fanny's connection with him, that she would have spared no pains to hunt him up, and for herself find out exactly his feelings toward Fanny. But now that her brother had written her concerning his wishes so plainly, she concluded to follow the principle taught her in her business life—"Obey orders, though you break owners."

She never had any secrets from Fanny, and so, as soon as they had finished their preliminary talk about the thousand and one little things which suggest themselves to friends who have been separated for a long time, she brought out her brother's letter and handed it to her niece.

She had hoped that Fanny would make a confidante of her. She said not a word while Fanny was reading the letter. Fanny gave a sweet though sad smile as she read her father's good old Puritanical idea of her Paul's scheming (?) to win her affections.

"Poor papa," she finally said; "the dear old thing has not the least idea how worldly-wise you and my California trip taught me to be."

Then came a sigh and a silence.

She finally threw off the mood with a shrug of her shoulders, and said, looking at her aunt with the nearest return to the old twinkle in her eye which that organ had shown for a long time :

"Aunt Florence, do you know you were the cause of my falling in love with Paul Morrison?"

"I? You odd girl, how? I never saw the man."

"Well, you made me peculiar, and he is peculiar in just the same way. One of those fellows it is a relief to find, who thinks for himself. He has a few general broad principles on which he is firm, and while using which he is in dead earnest; but when not, easily and carelessly assumes the airs and ways of the average society man, keeping from all but the favored few who know him the fact that this society air is his artificial self, and that the true man is hidden by that artificiality."

"Just the sort of man to completely disgust your father."

"Exactly; because it would take him so long to know him. You see, father is so wrapped up in the theory of doing things because it is the 'right thing' to do them, and of not doing things because 'people will talk,' that it would take him a dreadfully long time to know Paul as he really is; but if he ever should, I know he would respect him for the good, sound principles he has underlying his actions."

"No, Fanny, you cannot tell whether he would or not. It is very hard to overturn prejudices inculcated by a lifelong training, you know."

"Yes, but he likes me, does n't he?"

"But if he had a son about to marry you would he like you for a daughter-in-law?"

That was a new way of putting it. It made her think.

"No, and yes. He would not want me if he only knew me in society, but he would if he actually knew me. And

that is just the way with Paul Morrison. I know papa likes me now, so he would Paul if he really knew him; for we are the very prototypes of each other, so far as mentality is concerned.

"Honestly, Aunt Florence, you would be astonished to see how two minds, brought up under completely different surroundings, should have the same peculiarities, and should have arrived at so many peculiar theories which were almost identically the same."

"Fanny, you interest me very much. But your dear old Bostonese father has this affair in hand, so we must obey orders. I suggest that we talk Morrison over fully tonight, and then let him become a tabooed subject forever after."

"All right, dear," Fanny answered, as she kissed her aunt. Then, after a moment's hesitation she gave her a general description of the gentleman and his mental peculiarities as she knew him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MRS. GAYLORD found Fanny much changed.

There was a subdued tone to the vivacity the girl tried to display to her friends, which showed to the aunt how much she had suffered.

Fanny was going through the same experience Morrison had on his ocean trip, while he was trying to drive her from his mind. Every thought seemed to have connected with it something which brought him back to her.

For distraction she dabbled in society in a dilletante way, but felt that she had become blasé. It was like drinking cider after having had champagne.

At last her cousin Fred bought a yacht and became an enthusiastic member of the Pacific Yacht Club. She thought outdoor life would be a distraction, and so joined him with equal enthusiasm in his ambition to make the "Sea Foam" the handsomest boat in the fleet. All her spare time was spent in working silk banners and designing new schemes in the way of decorations for the yacht.

She spent about half her time with Fred over at Sausalito, a little town across from San Francisco, where the "Sea Foam" was anchored at the house of the club. By the time Fred began to plan for his summer's cruise she had become quite "aquatic," as she expressed it.

To Fred's surprise, she actually talked his mother into chaperoning a party for a trip down the coast as far as Los Angeles. Mrs. Gaylord had a summer cottage near the sea-shore at Santa Monica, and Fanny arranged for their party to go down by water, stopping at Monterey, Santa Cruz, Santa Barbara and other seaside resorts on their way.

There, at Santa Monica, she had almost persuaded herself into feeling that she had completely forgotten Morrison, until one morning as she swam out to the raft, she noticed a man swimming toward her with the same long, strong, powerful stroke he used to have that summer she spent with him four years before at Bar Harbor.

"Can I never forget him?" she thought.

Her whole life of that season came back to her, and she sat there on the raft in the balmy, soft, California July morning, day-dreaming, until Fred happened to notice her, and called:

"What are you trying to do, Fanny, bake your complexion?"

She did not answer, but slid softly down into the water, and with a long, easy, graceful stroke slowly swam back

to shore. Then she picked up the morning paper and strolled down to a secluded spot on the beach, where having arranged herself behind a huge sunshade, she unfolded the paper and lazily began to read it.

As luck would have it a little sonnet caught her eye :

“ Tell me, O Time, the utmost of thine art,
 Thy wondrous healing art that men so praise ;
 For which no feat too hard is, but to raise
 The dead once more and lost life re-impart.
 Men say that thou canst ease the burdened heart,
 And bring new dower of light to darksome days,
 And new companionships to lonely ways,
 New joys whose charms hold back the tears that start.
 Hast thou no cup save cold Lethæan draught,
 Which blots the past when I its virtues drain ?
 Give me the wine of love that once I quaffed,
 Tho’ but in dream I’ll drink it once again.
 No comfort may I find in all that craft
 If death of love alone can heal love’s pain.”

Fate seemed possessed that morning ; everything tended to bring her thoughts to him, and she again unconsciously became lost in sad reveries, fancies in which there were intermingled yearnings for the man of her heart, or at all events of her thought.

“ Why should not fate send him to me here ? ” she found her heart saying. “ In this perfectly lazy, lover-like weather ; in this perfectly lazy, dear old humdrum town, midst these perfectly lazy, uninteresting, society nonentities.”

Something seemed to have given her a premonition, for she was interrupted by Fred’s voice—

“ Ahoy there, behind the red sunshade ! Am I spoiling a spooning match ? ”

“ Only one with my memories, Fred,” she answered, and lifting the sunshade turned to see why he had hunted her up.

"Guess what I have for you?"

"Can't," she said listlessly, her whole nature having been so wrapped up in her thoughts of a moment before that she could not command the force necessary to assume an artificial interest.

"Well, I have a letter for you from Los Angeles in a strange man's hand," he said, as he tossed it to her.

It was lucky for her that she missed it, and that it fell with the direction down, for had Fred not turned away before her eyes caught the address, he would have seen the blood leave her face so suddenly that she nearly fainted.

The address was in Morrison's handwriting!

It seemed to her as though she could almost hear her heart beat, it throbbed so violently.

With a mighty effort at composure she called after him:

"Thank you awfully, Fred. I suppose I must dress for luncheon."

She hurried to her room at the bath-house as rapidly as she could without attracting attention.

When she was at last safely alone she found herself almost too nervous to break open the envelope.

It read:

"HOLLENBECK HOTEL, LOS ANGELES.

"I thought fate had intended I should return to England without having had an opportunity to explain to you how she had forced me to play the unhappy, almost unmanly part I have in your life and that of your cousin.

"With that idea in mind I arrived in Los Angeles this morning en route home, via Portland, Tacoma and the Canadian Pacific. As luck would have it, I picked up the morning paper, where to my astonishment almost the first article which caught my eye was the announce-

ment from Santa Monica that 'Fred Gaylord brought down a party from San Francisco in his new yacht "Sea Foam." Mrs. Gaylord intends to spend the summer at her cottage in Santa Monica, and will probably entertain extensively, assisted by her niece, Miss Fanny Northrop, of Boston.'

"Both of us always were fatalists. Hence the peculiar coincidence of our both being in this out-of-the-way country so unexpectedly at the same time, gives me the hope that fate has, at last, offered me an opportunity to right myself before you, and that I may go back to my country knowing that you at least understand me, and the reasons for my unfortunate actions.

"I write to ask you to grant me an interview. I assure you on the word of a gentleman that I will merely detain you long enough to explain my position, so that you may learn to think of me without loathing.

"I had intended remaining in Los Angeles but one day. I will now stay here two, to await your decision.

"In memory of our many happy moments together at Bar Harbor that summer and in Boston afterwards, grant me an opportunity to regain an honorable standing in your mind.

"Yours faithfully,

"PAUL MORRISON.

"LOS ANGELES, July 7, 18—"

"I wonder," she said half aloud as she kissed the letter, "if fate has relented."

All sentimentality, however, gave way before the practical problem, where to meet him.

Of course she could not see him at the house—her aunt would not permit it. What should she do? She stopped in her dressing, she was so engrossed with her thoughts.

Finally a happy thought struck her.

She remembered, as it was full moon, the weather so balmy and soft, and the nights so lovely, that Fred and the manager of the hotel had arranged for a moonlight swim from the beach that evening.

The facts that both she and Morrison were excellent swimmers, that she was the only lady who had ever swum to the outer raft near where the "Sea Foam" lay anchored, that few of the gentlemen ever swam out there even in the day-time, that moonlight swims generally meant lolling on the beach or merely playing in shallow water,—all came to her, and left her to reason that the outer raft would be the one place where she and he could be alone without her aunt knowing of it.

Her mind was made up at once; the raft was the place.

How was she to get him word? She studied over the matter while dressing, and determined to telegraph him.

With this idea in view she embraced the first opportunity to withdraw from the party without attracting attention, and hastened to the telegraph office.

"PAUL MORRISON,

"Hollenbeck Hotel,

"Los Angeles.

"Come down tonight. Call for letter in general post office here.

"FANNY."

She knew that he would arrive at thirty-five minutes past four that afternoon, and that in the mean time she could evolve the details of her plan.

After considerable thought she determined to write him to meet her at the raft. His letter had no superscription so she decided to have none. She mailed the

letter herself, and then went home to wonder what that night was to bring forth.

She said in the letter :

"Our motto in our halcyon days was 'Give fate a chance.' I have concluded to do so now, as I confess I would like to have a more pleasant memory of you.

"My father gave my aunt instructions not to let me see, hear or think of you. Therefore, we must be discreet.

"My cousin and the people at the hotel give a moonlight swim on the beach from eight to ten tonight.

"There is a raft anchored near a white yacht in the harbor. I will be on that raft at nine o'clock sharp. It is so far out that none of the ladies saving myself ever dare swim out to it, and is the only place I can think of where I can meet you alone without exciting suspicion.

"Till then I am

"Yours very truly,

"FANNY NORTHROP."

"SANTA MONICA, July 7, 18—"

Paul Morrison had gone through a very trying experience during the last year.

Whatever John Craig's faults had been, he certainly was very thoughtful of his nephew in a worldly way. The will provided for him to form a corporation with some speculators in New Mexico who owned an undivided share with his uncle in a large range, and a stock and cattle business.

Morrison found plenty of detail to engage his mind, carrying out his uncle's plans. He seemed to be under a lucky star so far as business was concerned; for, as soon as he had matters well in hand, an opportunity presented itself to sell a controlling interest to an English

syndicate. He completed the negotiations and was thus enabled to return to Europe with a large ready cash capital and an assured income.

With possibilities for leisure came plans for the future.

Then the pent-up memories which his active business life had been holding in check came bursting upon him with irresistible impulse.

He had heard no word from Fanny Northrop since the receipt of that long delayed letter at Eton, yet he longed for one more opportunity to hear that happy mellifluent voice, to see the sparkle of those eyes as she gave some original response in her vivacious way, and to experience that feeling of complete unison which had made her companionship so agreeable to him.

But he dashed all such thoughts aside as not to be dreamed of, when he remembered that his letter making advances in that direction had been unanswered.

He stoically determined to give up all hope for domestic happiness, and to return to his home and devote himself to the life of a man of letters.

* * * * *

After sending his letter to Fanny Northrop at Santa Monica, Morrison roamed around Los Angeles in a nervous sort of a way, scarcely knowing what to do with himself. He tried all sorts of expedients ; even going so far as to permit one of the cohort of real estate agents infesting that otherwise lovely city to get an impression that he was a prospective purchaser.

In vain, however ; for, between rhetorical phrases descriptive of "heaven-sent climate," and hard business expressions of "cheapest corner in the city ; double itself in a month," he found his thoughts sandwiching in conjectures about the possibilities of an answer to his note.

At last the telegram arrived.

His real estate friend would have been sure that the expression of happiness which lighted his face, after reading it, meant news of the receipt of a fortune, had he been given time to do so, before Morrison hastened to the clerk of the hotel to ask what time the next train started for Santa Monica.

On the train, Morrison had been counting the seconds, and each second seemed to him a minute. After he had rushed to the postoffice at Santa Monica, and found out Fanny's arrangement for the meeting, each second lengthened itself into an hour.

He dared not let himself think of what the night might bring forth, for fear that hope, "which springs eternal in the human breast," would build air-castles, which, when broken, should add another wound to his already much-scarred heart.

It might have been a little comfort to him had he known that she who was the cause of all this nervous expectation was in exactly the same condition. Which of the two awaited the slow advance of time toward the appointed hour with the greater impatience, would have been hard to determine.

About eight o'clock Morrison sauntered down to the beach, and found quite a party gathered there.

A huge canvas had been stretched for a canopy, and formed a sort of open pavilion on the beach, wherein the chaperones could enjoy themselves planning matches, while their proteges were wandering down the moonlit beach, or leisurely floating on the brine, trying to render their chaperones' plans futile.

The tent was gaily decorated with colored lights and Chinese lanterns. At one end a string band, composed largely of a harpist and several Mexican mandolin artists, discoursed odd Spanish waltzes and soft Italian

melodies. Not a breath of air seemed moving on the beach.

Los Angeles does have some of the balmiest, most charmingly soft evenings and nights. They remind the traveler of the South Sea tropics.

This particular night was especially warm and delightful, even for Los Angeles.

The most enthusiastic land boomer, at the height of his rhetorical enthusiasm, would have been unable to have exaggerated its loveliness.

It was the kind of a night that leads the sentimental love-sick swain into beguiling her who is the idol of his heart to some sheltered corner, there, a la Claude Melnotte, to pour into her willing ear quotations from the passionate Lorenzo,

“ In such a night as this,
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees,
And they did make no noise—in such a night
Troilus, methinks, mounted the Trojan walls
And sighed his soul toward the Grecian tents
Where Cressid lay that night.”

Very little more of this sort of thing, and Morrison could have closed his eyes and fancied himself carried into fairyland.

However, the poor fellow deemed it best to keep himself as much in the background as possible, and watch the others.

Finally, from sheer nervousness, although it was fully twenty minutes before the appointed time, he took to the water to try the distance to the outer raft. He was a gallant swimmer, but he acknowledged to himself that it was a big swim. Hardly had he accustomed himself to the situation, when he heard some one making for the raft.

"We are not to be alone. The fates are not kind," he thought, as he prepared to strike out for the shore.

All at once the peculiar, graceful, sinuous stroke seemed familiar to him. He strained his eyes in the direction of the daring swimmer.

"Yes. It was she!"

How his heart leaped. He could hardly contain himself as he waited for her to come closer.

As she approached he leaned forward to assist her to the raft.

"Miss Northrop, let me help you. You are very kind."

"Thank you," was all she could manage to say, the long swim having nearly exhausted her breath.

But that dear tone of that dear voice made those two words more eloquent to him than the most beautifully balanced flourish the most finished rhetorician could have used.

While she regained her breath he sat watching her, drinking in the sight of her comely outlines, and gazing at that bright face with a look of affectionate interest, which gave him a completely changed expression.

"This was very kind of you, Miss Northrop," he finally repeated.

"Not at all. Our feelings in this matter are mutual; I wanted to have a chance to ask you some questions also," she answered, and then waited for him to commence.

"Miss Northrop," he began, trying bravely but ineffectually not to permit his feelings to cause his voice to quiver, "I have asked for an interview so that I can return to my old home, knowing that you understand the cause for my actions. I am not going to be melodramatic, nor permit myself any display of the feelings which you must know I have in check this instant. I am going to tell a plain, unvarnished tale.

“From my relations toward you, and my last letter from Eton, you must know how much I have been interested in you. My unhappy connection with the lady who is now Mrs. Cameron has, of course, left you with the impression that I am a miserable, scheming scamp, if that expression is harsh enough. I am fearful, also, that you think me a hypocrite. I want to do myself the justice to have you thoroughly understand my position, for, believe me, your opinion of me is of more importance than everything else in the world.

“I will try to be brief. From the time of my father’s death I was trained with but two ideas: one to develop my will power over the control of mental action; the other that my uncle, John Craig, whom I had never seen, was so much my benefactor that he was entitled to my reverence, respect and gratitude.

“He furnished my mother with the financial means of giving me a University education. At my graduation I tendered him my thanks and my services.

“To my great surprise, he accepted the latter, and announced that he desired I should go to America and marry Wawona Brooke, merely explaining that by so doing I would be uniting two adverse titles to the Cherokee lands, one of which he already held.

“He enjoined secrecy, particularly of my relationship to him; as I then thought, merely to expedite his scheme for a title.

“You know the rest of my story. How Wawona Brooke became interested in me because of my resemblance to my cousin, her former lover. Of her love for him, of course, I then knew nothing. I did respect Miss Brooke most highly. In fact, had I not met you I feel I should never have known that I had not cared for her as much as my peculiar mind could care for any one. In truth, had not that last unhappy scene with your father

brought me to a realization of my feelings toward you, I would probably never have known that my will power would have permitted me to love any one."

He stopped. She had not said one word, but had maintained an earnest interest. An almost irresistible desire to clasp her in his arms took possession of him ; he overcame it, however, and continued :

"How our friendship grew, you know as well as I. The peculiar traits of mentality which my will gave me, you had acquired by some other means. I have always felt that it was greatly owing to the influence of your aunt. Your ready appreciation of every reference ; your intuitive comprehension of every thought ; in fact, our complete similarity of mental action from the first, made you an exquisite study to me. I had no idea, however, of being untrue to you or to Wawona.

"After I had, in my blind following of the dictates of my will, heedless of my great interest in you, proposed to Wawona, we had that scene in the 'den.' That night I saw it all. I understood that God had made me appreciate you more than would be wise for me to attempt to explain—possibly, as a punishment for having, in my confidence in my own will, permitted myself to have a reckless lack of appreciation of the divinity of His power. As I say, that night I had a most peculiar contest between natural, spontaneous love and hard, worldly common sense. I knew I had already antagonized your father, and I had already spoken to Wawona. If I had then withdrawn from my engagement, your father's antagonism would have been increased, and Wawona's feelings would have been outraged. At the same time, I would have estranged my vindictive uncle, and would thus have completely cut off my revenue and effectually have prevented myself from honorably making a proffer to you. It seemed as though fate had left me nothing

but to act as I did, and trust that time would give you an opportunity to know the real truth.

“As luck would have it, your long delayed letter from Dover reached me at a time when I had demonstrated my financial independence of my uncle; then it was I wrote you that letter from Eton, in which I covertly offered to break my engagement with Miss Brooke, if you would give me a word of encouragement. As you know, you never answered my letter.”

At this, her face lighted up with an expression of joy—the last impediment which had troubled her mind was removed by the thought: “He never received my answer!”

Not knowing this, he continued: “And nothing was left me but to do as I have done.”

He gave a sigh of the deepest sorrow, as the whole unhappy scene came back to him.

How different his thoughts, had he been able to read those of his companion.

“Covertly offered to break his engagement—never received my answer—” were running through her mind. “He meant what his letter said—he loves me!” She could have jumped into his arms, but she controlled herself, contented to wait for what she now knew the denouement would be. What a change those few words had made. Her whole, old self seemed to come back. It was as if an immense restraining weight had been taken taken off her soul, allowing the old buoyancy of feeling to well forth.

Morrison remembered his resolve not to be dramatic, and hastily checking a melancholy tendency, continued:

“Finally, however, I had made up my mind to give up all hope of ever seeing you, and to return to the Continent. Had not my eye lighted upon that notice in the

paper this morning, I probably would have been on my way there now."

He had done. There was nothing more for him to say, looking at the matter from his particular point of view at just that particular moment. However, there was yet another standpoint from which the circumstances might be judged. About the very last thing he could have guessed as the basis of Fanny's mental process, at this identical moment, was the precise one with which her mind chanced to be busied, that is,—wondering how fate was to bring about their engagement; for she felt, in her now thoroughly happy mind, that it was coming. She had about made up her mind to precipitate matters, when she determined to be governed by their old maxim, and let fate have its way in this, as it had taken so much upon itself in her past connection with her great, unhappy lover, who had been so much to her for so long a time.

After a while silence became embarrassing, and he said :

"I had hoped to meet you in a parlor; and, after I had made myself understood, that you would grant me one request."

"Which was?" she said, with a dash of her old chic, quite surprising to him.

"That you would take your guitar; and, as a last request, sing me 'Marguerite,' as you did in the Walling's conservatory on the night of the reception. Do you remember it?"

His voice trembled.

"As if it were yesterday. I will sing it for you."

"When?"

"Now. I left my guitar in the cabin of my cousin's yacht the other night. We can easily swim over there and get it; I know where he keeps the key."

He did not know what to make of her. He had determined not to give way to his feelings; that he would plainly state the facts, and then being assured that he had at least regained her respect, would follow the course he had marked out; and his restrained desire to break that determination made him very nervous.

She, on the contrary, was perfectly at ease; for, knowing what the end was to be, and having made up her mind to let fate have its way, she gave up all idea of planning, except to permit that long-troubled soul of hers to be impulsively happy as a reward for its fearful punishment.

Neither spoke a word as they quietly swam to the "Sea Foam." When he had assisted her to climb on deck, she quickly went to a hidden drawer forward, and having procured the key, unlocked the door of the cabin.

She excused herself and went in alone. Morrison thought she was gone an age. In reality it was a very few moments.

His waiting had its reward, however, for when she appeared he assured himself she was the most charming picture he had even seen.

In place of her bathing dress, she had donned a complete tennis suit which she had found among the things they had not yet taken ashore.

Guitar in hand she made a perfect picture in the moonlight. Evidently she intended to stay, for she tossed him a long heavy ulster, saying, "Probably you will find that comfortable over your wet suit. I think it will fit. Fred is about your size."

Then without appearing to notice the effect which her fantastically enticing appearance had on him, she suggested:

"Come around here to the ship chairs, this side the cabin, so we will not be seen from the shore."

He followed her forward and took the chair to which she motioned. She leaned against the rail of the schooner, her guitar still in hand.

Morrison could not make up his mind what to do. Her manner gave him hope, yet he felt it were well not to delude himself with false promise.

Had she studied effects all her life, she could never have made a more enticing picture to him than she did leaning there against that rail in the moonlight.

"And you want to hear 'Marguerite'?" she asked.

"If you will be so kind."

Oh, how that sweet, sad song, uttered by that sweet, dear voice, moved him!

She knew it would, and poured all the feeling her well-trained and naturally flexible voice was capable of into the song.

As she finished the last strain—"And oh the thought you'll not be mine will break my heart, Marguerite!" he would have given his fortune to have taken her to his heart. She was singing in a very low tone to avoid attracting attention, and when she finished she resumed her former position at the rail, and lazily looked at her lover.

Morrison sat as if riveted to his seat.

Neither spoke for a time. Finally her face lit up with a smiling look of determination. Evidently she was going to help fate.

She stood erect and asked:

"Paul, can I sing you another song?"

That "Paul" nearly took him off his feet, or rather off his chair.

His heart leaped into his mouth. He could not readily believe his senses.

He had a fleeting idea of speaking something of his

feelings, but dismissed the thought as ill-advised and contented himself with,

“Certainly.”

She saw that she had “met the enemy and he was hers,” and after several times picking the accompaniment to “Dear Heart,” a song which had become very dear to her because she had practiced it so many times with the same dear old fellow before her, in her mind, she began to sing :

“So long the day, so dark the day,
Dear heart, before you came,
It seems to me it cannot be,
The world is still the same,
For then I stood as in some wood
And vainly sought for light,
But now day dawns on sunlit lawns,
And life is glad and bright.”

Then, summoning all her power, she drifted into the chorus, as if pleading to him :

“Leave me not, oh leave me not,
Dear heart, dear heart !
I did not dream that we should part,
I love but thee, oh, love thou me
And leave and leave me not,
Dear heart, dear heart,
Leave me not, dear heart.”

He could not imagine what to do.

He felt that she could not be trifling at such a time as this, yet he could not hope that all the song and manner implied was really true.

She saw his emotion, and realized that the despondency which fate's unkind treatment had put on his courage was preventing him from acting as his heart dictated. She determined to assist him further.

“I said I wanted to ask you a few questions. May I?”

“Certainly.”

"Did you mean everything you said in that letter from Eton?"

"Every word!" he answered, in a tone that would have carried conviction with it, even if she had not been already convinced.

"What would you say if I said I had answered it?"

"Answered my letter?" he shouted, as he jumped to his feet—"Then it must have been lost!"

At last he hoped again, and with that hope came courage.

"And may I ask what you said in it?"

This was her chance; he now stood almost beside her, his handsome, manly figure showing to better advantage than ever in the rough old sea coat. All the pent-up love for the man whom fate, by fantastic tricks, had kept from her so long, exhibited itself in her voice as she replied:

"That I loved you!"

"Fanny!" was all he could say as he took her in his arms.

What joy there was in expressing their pent-up love.

In that embrace the better, grander nature of each seemed to tell the other they were nevermore to part. After a time he released her sufficiently to say:

"But we must not do this, must we?"

"Not unless we are engaged," she answered with the old twinkle in her eye.

"Well, then, let me propose—Miss Northrop, will you marry me?"

With an appreciation of the fact that, at last, they understood each other, that all this old omnipresent yearning for a love she felt belonged to but could not be claimed by her, was over, came back her willful playfulness, and she asked in a cheery way:

"Are your intentions honorable?"

He caught the spirit and answered :

"They are."

"Are you sure you love me?"

"I swear it."

"Then," she said, as she took his hands to make him automatically gesticulate to suit her words, "do as Wawona did with her father. Put your left hand on my heart and hold your right hand—" he interrupted her with an embrace, for as she had taken his left hand and put it on her heart in conformity with her words, the first touch of that wildly beating organ was too much for the lover's warm blood to resist. He had better use for his right hand, and his left hand was with it.

Presently she withdrew herself sufficiently from his embrace to look him full in the face, and said, with an affectation of earnestness :

"Well, I am convinced, you need not swear."

"Thank you," he said, entirely releasing her from his arms, as he felt that she had meant that as a hint to return from the realms of bliss to this mundane sphere.

The next instant the thought came to him :

"How are we to break the news to her aunt?" and immediately the further thought, "I had better be absolutely certain of my engagement first," so he said :

"But I want an answer to my question. Will you marry me? Do you love me?"

"With all my heart, and all my might, and all my soul. So much so that all the trips to Europe and all the trips to California that father could plan, could not make me forget you."

"Well," he said, jokingly, as soon as he had completed an embrace which the occasion seemed to require, "I suppose I need not ask *you* to swear?"

"Well," she said, looking up at him with an exagger-

atedly earnest look on her face, "I will if you want me to."

"All right, then, I want you to," he answered, the smile on his face showing at last that he was thoroughly *en rapport* with her happy mood.

"Well, I suppose if I must I must," she answered, the look of piquant deviltry which came to her eyes showing that the old, happy Fanny Northrop of four years before had entirely returned.

With that she drew herself close to him, put her mouth up to his ear and roguishly asked :

"Do you really insist?"

"I do."

"Well, then," she whispered :

"Damn."

THE END.

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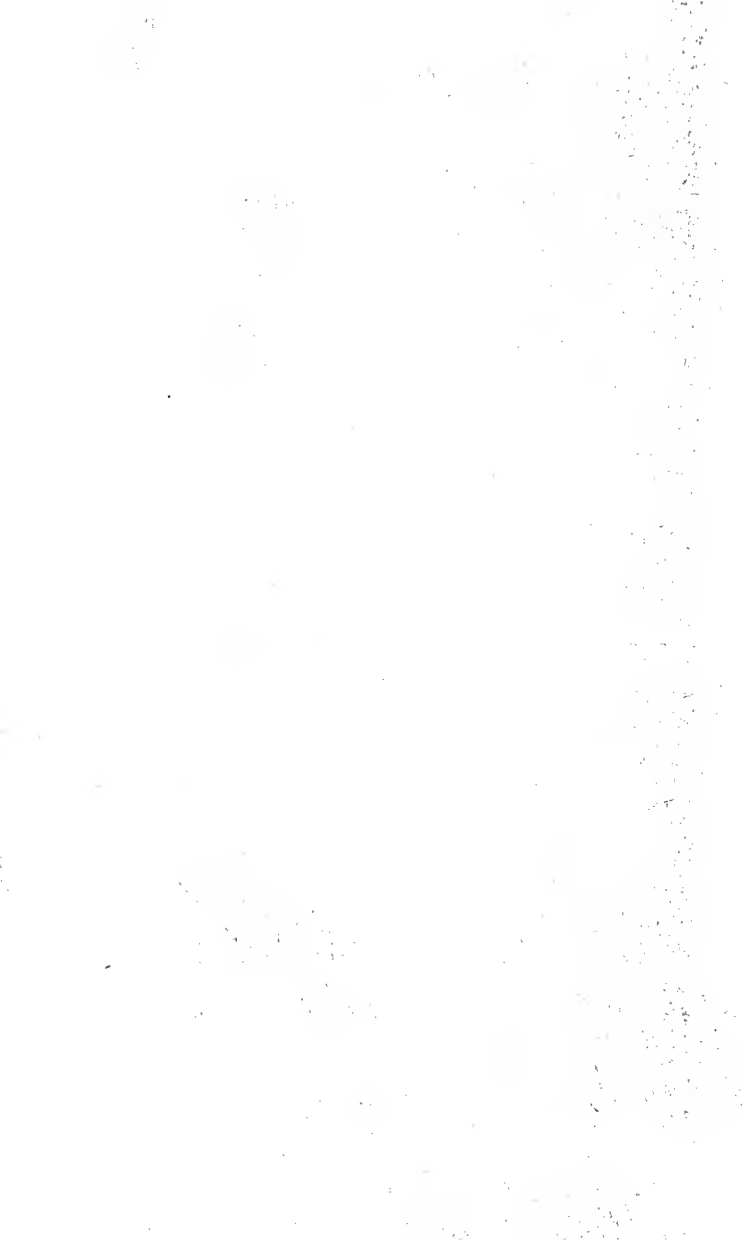
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